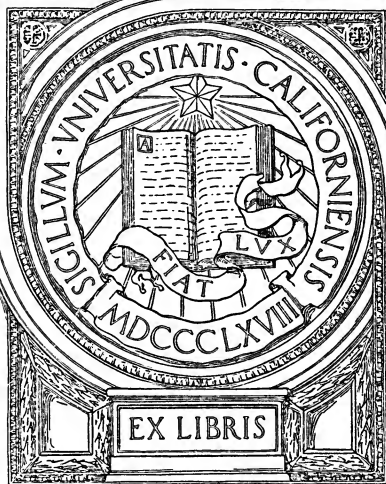


BESIDE
THE RED
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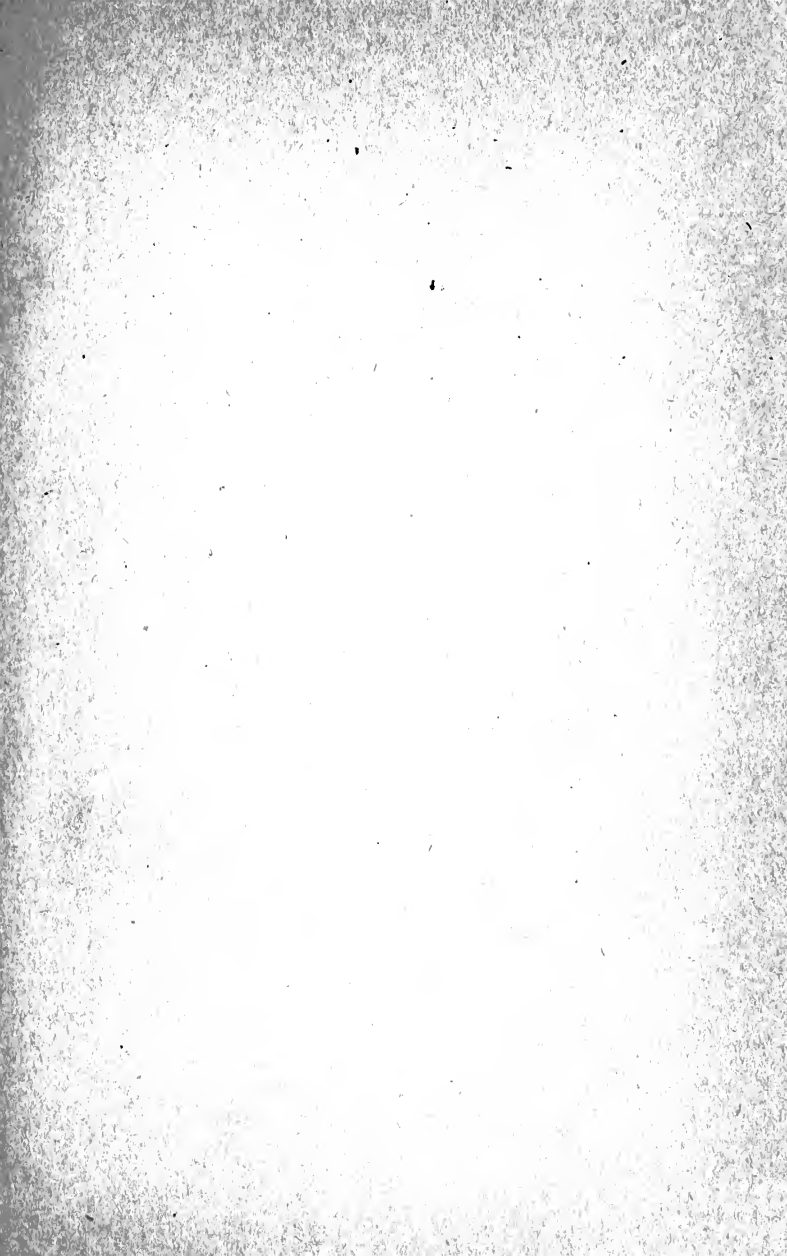
TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS
IN A CHINESE CITY

KINGSTON
DE GRUCHE

GIFT OF
HORACE W. CARPENTIER



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BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

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A BRIDGE IN CHINA, SHOWING JUNKS MOORED ALONGSIDE

[Frontispiece

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

TOILS AND TRIUMPHS
IN A CHINESE CITY

BY
KINGSTON DE GRUCHE

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS



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PREFACE

THIS little book is written to answer questions asked hundreds of times concerning the detail of missionary work, and the life and surroundings of missionaries.

The natives are sketches from life.

Chinese idiom has been observed as far as possible in conversations. The names of persons and places are translated.

The Christian places of worship are spoken of as 'worshipping-halls'—so the writer has called them 'churches.'

'Church' has been used also as in the New Testament, 'The church in thy house.'

A 'catechist' is an 'evangelist'—a catechumen is one learning the doctrine, and being prepared for baptism.

PREFACE

One cannot, in speaking at a meeting in China, say 'My friends.' The correct way to begin is, 'Beloved Church Fathers, Church Mothers, Church Brothers, Church Sisters, and all you men here assembled, greeting.' In speaking of elderly Christian women, they would be called Church Mothers, and young Christian women Church Sisters; an old man would be termed a Church Uncle, &c.

It is hoped that this simple story will rouse some to work and pray for Foreign Missions who have not hitherto cared to do so. It has been written in short chapters, so that it may be convenient to read aloud at working parties.

It is sent forth with the prayer that God will use it for His glory.

March, 1909.

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Beside the Red Mountain

CHAPTER I

THE ARRIVAL

Home is the place of Peace. . . . Wherever a true Wife comes . . . this Home is always round her. . . . Home is wherever she is.—RUSKIN.

‘PEACE, Lady ; peace, Pastor, peace,’ rang out on all sides as Harold Somers, the new pastor, entered the compound of the mission house in Fountain Bridge City, and assisted his bride to get out of her sedan-chair.

‘Peace, peace, peace,’ they replied, bowing on all sides.

‘I invite you to enter,’ said the pretty wife of the catechist, resplendent in her

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

best clothes of truly Oriental colouring, taking Mrs. Somers by the hand and leading her into the native guest-room to the second place of honour at the north end of the room. The chief place was reserved for the pastor, who shortly followed with the catechist and schoolmaster.

Hot water was quickly brought, the guests being invited to wash the dust of the journey from their hands and faces ; then tea and tobacco-pipes were handed round.

Mr. and Mrs. Somers were very glad to have the tea, but refused the pipes.

‘The Pastor and the Lady do not smoke,’ was whispered loudly, as the Chinese women smoked and passed the pipes on from one to another.

‘They don’t smoke—really ? how very astonishing ! How white her eyes are ! and her hair is losing its colour !’ exclaimed one woman to another.

THE ARRIVAL

‘The Lady is weary of body with so much travelling,’ said Mrs. Ding, who knew a little of foreigners, and had been sent up to help Mrs. Somers in a school for training Bible-women ; and having just accomplished the same journey of five days’ travelling, knew from experience the weariness of it. ‘We are truly glad to see the Lady here—it gives us great joy.’

‘Great joy certainly, great joy,’ exclaimed Mrs. Cho, with a face wreathed in smiles. ‘Many years we have wanted lady missionary here to rule the work among our women. Much joy comes now to every heart, that the Lady has come to live amongst us.’

‘Truly much joy,’ echoed the school-master’s wife—trying the while to keep a young child in order who clung to her dress.

‘The Lady must be hungry ; I will

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hurry the coolies with supper,' said Mrs. Cho, rising and leaving the guest-room.

'How did you come, Lady?' asked one who had just arrived on the scene.

'We came in a boat part of the way, and part also we sat in chairs,' replied Mrs. Somers.

'Did you not have to carry loads?' asked the late comer with astonishment. Her back was still sore with her last journey, as her husband had sat in a chair and been carried all the way, and she had walked behind carrying his load of clothes, her own, and their household gods.

'Foreign ladies never carry loads when they walk—our country too hot for them to walk much,' explained Mrs. Ding.

'But she has large feet, like mine,' persisted the burden-bearer.

'Lady,' asked another, 'why is your hair not black? your face is not many years old, and your eyes are blue.'

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‘In our country ladies have hair many colours—golden, red, brown, black, white; in my family we all have brown hair. In our country, too, people have eyes many colours—blue, grey, brown, and black.’

‘What a nice fashion of clothes you wear in your country!’ said Mrs. Cho, ‘and no fastener round your waist like us.’

‘Yes, this fashion is very useful,’ replied Mrs. Somers, who had arranged that all her blouses should hang long to her knees, without a belt, so as to conform somewhat to Chinese prejudices, and felt glad that it had already found favour in their eyes.

A native feast of welcome was served to the women at one table with Mrs. Somers, and to the pastor and the Chinese men at another. The natives were much delighted with the grace and ease with which both the missionary and his wife

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used chop-sticks, and were able to converse in Chinese.

Several speeches of welcome were made by the native Christians, and the pastor thanked them all for the hearty welcome they had given to him and his bride. After long-drawn-out farewells the guests departed, entreating Mr. and Mrs. Somers to 'return and sit,' while they, with equal politeness, begged them 'to slowly, slowly walk away.'

'My wife,' said Mr. Somers tenderly, 'you must be very tired. Let us just look at the rooms, unpack what we need for the night, and then you must go to bed; this has been a long, tiring day for you.'

As they entered each room Harold Somers dedicated it to God's service, and prayed for God's blessing on all that should be done or attempted in their new life together. Then he went off to his study

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to have his usual quiet hour alone with God.

The large district assigned to Harold Somers would have been a great responsibility even if the language spoken had been English ; but to be the chief pastor of two large counties, having forty congregations in his charge, with about thirty catechists, twenty-five day schools and schoolmasters to be guided and directed in such a difficult language as Chinese, seemed a mighty task, almost an impossibility ; but he looked up steadfastly to God, remembering His promise, ' Lo, I am with you all the days,' and then fell on his knees praying long and earnestly for himself and his wife in their new work.

The next day Mrs. Somers arranged to give a return feast to the native Christian women in the large school-house where some eighteen Christian women had come to be trained as Bible-women. Mrs. Ding

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made all the preparations, and when the feast was over Mrs. Somers gave a short address on 'Christian Unity.' She knew these women had just arrived from many different homes, and many temptations quite new to them would assail them, so she struck this note, hoping it would help them in their life together, and gave them this text to remember: 'That they may be one, as We are one,' from our Lord's prayer for His disciples.

Meanwhile in the native guest-room Mr. Somers had given a return feast to the Christian men belonging to the mission, the catechist, Mr. Cho, and the school-master. At the close of the feast he spoke for a few minutes on the power of the Holy Spirit to recreate our spirits—renewing us day by day; and the power of the Spirit for service—for no work done apart from the Spirit's power glorifies God. 'Brothers,' he said, 'I need more of God's

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Holy Spirit ; pray for me that I may receive Him more and more day by day. Pray for yourselves, that you too may receive God the Holy Spirit ; pray for the spread of God's kingdom in this city, that many may receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour. No good work can be accomplished without prayer—so, my brothers, pray.'

Silence followed, then the old Church Uncle, Mr. Lo—with one eye—spoke.

'My brothers, I seek the same favour. I too need God the Holy Spirit to dwell in me.'

'Let us pray,' said the pastor, and there quickly followed prayers from one and another. Then, as the convicting power of God's Holy Spirit came upon them, confession of sin followed—sins of lying, theft, deceit, enmity, &c. (a most unusual thing in China for people whose chief aim is to 'save their face,' as they express it).

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When they at last rose from their knees, Mr. Lo suggested a prayer-meeting three evenings a week in the guest-room, where they might specially pray for the Holy Spirit's power and the work of the district.

This was arranged, and proved, as the months followed a great blessing to the whole mission.

As the Christians come from so many families where the heads of the household are not Christians, family worship is in most instances an impossibility ; so morning and evening the little bell rang for worship, and as many as could came to the Chinese church to begin and end the day with prayer to God. Mr. Somers soon found what a help and strength this little service was to the Christians, and he or the catechist was always there to conduct it.

A few words describing the house of this missionary and his wife will help our readers to picture them in their true

THE ARRIVAL

surroundings, and better enable them to understand the story of their work.

The mission house was built on piles firmly fixed in a cemented foundation. On the cemented floor were six rooms: a box-room, store-room, dispensary, waiting-room, guest-room, and watchman's room. Above these came a dining-room, which opened into a sitting-room; beyond, there were three bedrooms and a study.

When the unpacking had been accomplished the rooms looked quite bright and homelike. A few pictures and photographs, a few Oriental rugs over chairs and seats of native manufacture, three or four tables with books, and Chinese vases, with flowers brought from the garden; here and there a palm from the hill-side, with a coloured scarf around the pot, made the sitting-room look very cool and refreshing.

The coolies fetched more palms and

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

ferns for the verandah, which was ten feet wide and went round the rooms, facing on the east to the little church and women's school, on the north to the boys' school, and on the west to the city wall. To the south were the kitchens and garden, the catechist's house, and the porter's room beside the outer compound gate.

The former missionary had worked hard and built the well-arranged premises ; now he had gone for his holiday to his own country, and Mr. and Mrs. Somers had succeeded him in the work.

They had both been in China nearly two years, and had studied Chinese so far as to have acquired a working knowledge of the language. They had been married nearly a month when they arrived in Fountain Bridge City.

The services on the Sunday following were of much interest ; the fact of the pastor having arrived attracted many,

THE ARRIVAL

and a spirit of prayer possessed one or two—while others were touched by the power of God during the day. The following week was given up to prayer-meetings, and the addresses dealt with many aspects of the power of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life. Those days were full of blessing to many souls, and the work made a new start forward.

Mrs. Somers soon won all hearts wherever she went by her bright manner and winning ways. The children of the mission compound at first were shy of her, but gradually becoming bolder, had private squabbles amongst themselves as to which one could nestle closest to her feet as she taught the classes of women. Later on a little day school was started for the younger children, and here they were taught quite simply 'the old, old story of Jesus and His love.'

There was one small heart, however,

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

that was quite hardened to the sweetest smiles of Mrs. Somers. The schoolmaster at the boarding-school had several children whose behaviour reflected much credit upon his training ; but there was one black lamb, and that the youngest, a girl of three years old and a very naughty child. Chinese parents are not noted for great wisdom in dealing with their refractory children, and a spirit of continual rebellion against any authority early manifested itself in ' Meek Heart,' the name given her at baptism, and never—thought those who knew her—had any name been so inappropriately bestowed. The schoolmaster thought even a baby must be trained in the right way, and brought Meek Heart every morning to worship. But she would not sit still ; even her father could not awe her into quietness. She would suddenly creep along under the seat and make her way to one and another of

THE ARRIVAL

her brothers, and sometimes ventured across the church to her bigger sister ; but keep quiet and good she would not. Matters reached a climax one morning when she made her way inside the Communion rails during the address, and was seized very firmly by the now distressed father, who saw that this 'spoilt reverence and must be stopped.' Meek Heart, kicking and screaming with all her power, was borne rapidly down the church, and carefully secured in the school-house until the rest of the family returned home.

'Lady,' said the distressed schoolmaster to Mrs. Somers, 'what can be done to Meek Heart ? The rod does not make her heart good, and my own heart is sad because of this child. Rebellion to parents is a great sin ! Were she a boy there would be much trouble, and it would be worth while ; but she is only a girl.'

After some consultation it was decided

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

that her punishment should be absence from church for a whole week, and as she liked attending the services, this was thought enough. During the week her mother made Meek Heart a pretty jacket, hoping that the fact of having on a new garment would encourage her to sit still ; but the first morning of her return to service proved a very hot one, and during prayer Meek Heart removed all her garments and crawled under the seats right to the very front. When the congregation rose from their knees, there stood Meek Heart in her little brown skin facing them all ! To the Chinese this was not so appalling a deed as to Mrs. Somers, who quickly caught her in her arms and carried her through the vestry straight back to her mother. The punishment this time was more severe—no church for some months. ‘ More years, more propriety,’ said the child’s mother.

CHAPTER II

FOUNTAIN BRIDGE CITY AND NEIGHBOUR- HOOD

I'll go where You want me to go, Lord,
O'er mountain or valley or sea ;
I'll say what You want me to say, Lord,
I'll be what You want me to be.

FOUNTAIN BRIDGE CITY lies low in a basin, surrounded by mountains, the wall wandering up hill and down dale until it encircles the whole city, where over thirty thousand Chinese dwell. It is situated in one of the sea-bordered provinces of China, and is reached from the port by travelling up-river for many miles—the last three or four days of the journey being made in sedan-chairs through beautiful country.

Though the mountain peaks are not covered with snow, yet the effect when

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

standing on one of the summits is wonderful, as they stretch out on either side like a vast, motionless, bluish-grey sea, billow following billow as far as the eye can reach. Tucked away in many hollows are little hamlets, containing, as the Chinese say, 'a hundred mouths' or 'one hundred and fifty hearths,' meaning of course that a hundred inhabitants live in this place, or about a hundred and fifty houses are in that village.

The whole journey from the port to Fountain Bridge City is full of change of scene. Here are gorges in the mountain-side, marvellous in their beauty, clothed with a wealth of foliage consisting of many varieties of bamboo, palm, and maidenhair fern; while the darker-tinted leaves of the candle-trees are lighted with their white wax balls, and the pomegranate-trees are gorgeous in their pink, red, and purple flowers.

In the valleys, resting the eyes with

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their blended greys, are oliveyards surrounding the houses dotted here and there, thus giving protection from the violent typhoons which pass over the country from time to time.

The quaint, dirty mud inns where the nights must be spent, which can be found in the larger villages, cause much astonishment and amusement to foreigners traveling for the first time, when in some cases goats and fowls share their bedroom. Although the greatest civility will be shown to any foreigner who can speak Chinese, and who has native servants of his own to carry out his wishes, yet the comfort, even where the inns are comparatively clean (as in rare instances they are) is not of such a nature as to tempt a prolonged stay.

On the last day of the journey, when the last mountain has been climbed, Fountain Bridge City comes into sight.

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

On the right stands the 'Red Mountain,' so called because of the red azaleas which cover it in the spring-time. The mountain-side has many terraces where rice is beginning to spring up in all its fresh young green. The road leads straight down to the South Gate of the city ; and when the traveller passes through its portals for the first time, a verse from the Psalms flashes into his mind, 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people from henceforth even for ever.'

The streets, like most Chinese streets, are long and narrow, rarely more than two yards wide. Queer little shops are open to the street, having no glass windows behind which to display their wares ; a silk-shop brilliant with its Oriental coloured silks, is next to one where cotton-wool quilts are displayed, and men padding others sit upon the counter hard at work ;



A CHINESE BARBER





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there is a restaurant where the cooking is done at the door in order that the savoury smell may attract the passer-by to walk inside. The umbrella-makers and lantern-makers sit on their counters folding and cutting oiled paper for umbrellas and lanterns. The barber shaves away with his victim placed in the doorway in full view of every passer-by.

Odours abound on all sides: pickled vegetables, bad drains, fish-shops displaying what the natives love so much—fish having a 'long-kept smell'! All day long men and women pass through the streets carrying loads of every description, including sewage in pails hung from yokes balanced on their shoulders: this custom alone continually reminds foreigners that many Eastern ways are open to improvement.

Of the villages to be found among the lovely mountains that surround Fountain

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Bridge City, none was more sheltered, nor in a more beautiful spot, than the White Owl Village. From time immemorial a great many white owls had lived in the ruins of the old temple, which hundreds of years before had been burnt down and never rebuilt—for the heads of the village had built a smaller temple some little distance away, and the ruins were entirely given up to the owls. For many generations Chinese boys had bathed in the small lake in the grounds on hot summer days; while the villagers came there day after day to cleanse their garments by beating them on the stones.

It was from this village that dear old Mr. Lo walked every Sunday down the mountains to the city church. The walk down took two hours, and the little old man, with his blue cotton coat and green trousers, white stockings and black shoes, was a quaint figure. His hair had begun

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to turn grey, but he still had a good-sized queue, his head and face were always shaved on Saturday, and his one closed eye gave a pathetic look to the happy, open countenance. In one hand he would carry a fan in hot weather, and in the other, tied in a red pocket-handkerchief, his large Chinese 'worshipping-books,' as he called his Bible and hymn-book.

When quite a young man he had gone up to the chief city of the province with a cousin of his, who was going in for his degree examination. During this memorable journey three days were spent in a native boat, and it was then his mind had been opened to the truth of the gospel. On the boat was an old man, a foreigner of venerable appearance, tall, stout, with a long grey beard and a mass of iron-grey hair on his head. He was a veteran missionary, who never let an opportunity pass of speaking for the Master he loved so well.

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Such was John Fitzpatrick, hailing from the 'Isle of Saints,' and possessing that genial loveliness that endears the sons of Erin, wherever they wander, to those with whom they come in contact. He ordered at his own expense tea and pipes to be served to all the passengers and crew. This put every one on a friendly footing at once, and the missionary moved about the deck, talking and joking with them in fluent Chinese. An hour later he began to tell them of the one true God and Jesus Christ His Son, the whole party listening with great respect ; and as he poured forth the story of God's love for sinful man, and showed God's wonderful mercy in providing Jesus to be the Saviour of all men, the Holy Spirit touched the hearts of many of his listeners.

During the ten days of their stay in the city every night found Mr. Lo at the house of Mr. Fitzpatrick, and before he returned

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home he had received Jesus as his Saviour. He was at once entered as a catechumen at Fountain Bridge City, and was baptized a year later. Since then he had gone straight forward in the Christian life. 'Saved to save others' might truly be said of him.

For many years he had taught in the Sunday school, and for the past seven had been a faithful elder of the church in Fountain Bridge City.

The romance of his marriage was always an interesting story in the mission. He had been very adverse to being married after he had become a Christian, as he was afraid his father would choose a heathen wife for him; and when the latter had suggested from time to time that he would arrange a marriage, Mr. Lo had been so earnest in his plea to be allowed to wait a little longer that his father had delayed making the necessary arrangements.

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

One summer, cholera was very prevalent in the country, and both old Mr. Lo and his eldest son died. 'Who is left to keep up the family name?' pleaded his mother; 'now at last you must marry.'

So Mr. Lo set off to see his friend, John Fitzpatrick, to ask his advice with regard to marriage. 'Whom do you desire to marry?' asked the missionary. 'Whoever the Pastor thinks would help me serve God and teach my old mother to be a Christian,' replied Mr. Lo.

The next morning they walked to the school for training Bible-women in Chief City and had a long talk with the lady in charge and the native matron, who told them of a young Christian woman, a widow, whose husband had been poisoned by a snakebite a short time after their marriage and had died. The missionary asked her if she would like to marry a good Christian

FOUNTAIN BRIDGE CITY

man, who wanted a wife that loved God, and would try to teach his mother to be a Christian.

The little woman answered that she would pray about it, and give a reply the following day.

The widow's answer the next day was a favourable one, and, having been introduced to her prospective husband, the missionary commended them in prayer to God and left them to have a little talk together.

'Are you willing to help me in teaching my mother to be a Christian?' asked Mr. Lo.

'I will help you in this matter when we are married, but that cannot be yet,' replied the woman.

'What hinders our marrying at once?' inquired Mr. Lo.

'My former husband is still lying at home unburied,' she replied, 'and our

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customs forbid remarriage until the husband is settled in his grave.'

'Truly this is a difficult business,' said Mr. Lo. 'When did your husband die?' he asked at length, after some silence had fallen between them.

'Two years ago,' she replied.

'Where is he waiting?' asked Mr. Lo.

'At his father's house in the Sugar Cane Village, three miles from here.'

'Why did you not bury him?' he asked.

'His father is poor, and we had no money. I also did not want heathen ceremony, but he was not a Christian, and his father's will prevailed.'

'I can pay for the funeral, but I must consult with Pastor Fitzpatrick how this matter must be completed,' said Mr. Lo.

'Is this the only hindrance?' he asked after another pause. 'I want you to be happy, and help me to teach my mother to be a Christian and serve God faithfully.'

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‘I understand. I will do my earnest endeavour in these matters. There is only this one hindrance,’ was her reply.

So Mr. Lo consulted with his pastor, and he undertook to see about the matter. During the next few days the former husband was buried quietly on the hill-side—the father-in-law, finding a little of Mr. Lo’s money very useful, was willing to arrange a quiet and immediate funeral.

‘Pastor,’ said Mr. Lo the following day, ‘can we be married early next week? I have nothing to wait for. This woman says she loves God, and will help me to serve Him, so the sooner we get home the better.’

No Chinese couple were ever more happy than were these two. At the end of the year their little son was born, but the wife died, and Mr. Lo had never married again.

At Fountain Bridge City it was the custom for the native Christians to collect

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

at the mission house about eight o'clock on the Sunday morning, bringing their midday meal with them. About nine o'clock young and old assembled in the mission church for Sunday school, and formed themselves into classes. Mr. Lo was the most earnest and diligent teacher of the old men's class. When the lessons were over, all the teachers with their classes stood up in turn to repeat the Golden Text; then the catechist or schoolmaster delivered a short address, and the school closed with hymn and prayer.

Directly school was over the women went to the training-school for Bible-women for rest and refreshment, and the men gathered in the guest-room at the catechist's house for the same purpose. Mr. Lo, or the 'old Church Uncle,' as he was commonly called, would gather a few of the men into the guest-room at the mission house for a prayer-meeting before morning

FOUNTAIN BRIDGE CITY

worship, to ask for a blessing on the service. Church service followed, at eleven o'clock, and the up-turned face of Church Uncle Lo was an inspiration to every preacher. That he was also of a shrewd practical nature the following incident will show.

At one of the Church Council meetings the question of repairing the mission church at a distant village was being discussed, and it seemed to Mr. Somers that if the village catechist was really diligent he could get such small repairs done by the Christians themselves. To his amusement the same idea struck Mr. Lo, who slowly rose and said, 'Pastor, I humbly suggest we pray God to repair the catechist and the Christians of this church under discussion—for if they have hot hearts towards God and His service they will soon repair their little church themselves.' Then he sat down, and promptly a brother

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

catechist prayed, and especially for the catechist and his congregation in that village. Needless to say, nothing further was heard of these small repairs.

CHAPTER III

DISPENSING

Saviour, to whom the sound of sorrow's sighing
 Ne'er came in vain,
For those twice sick in godless darkness dying
 We plead again.
Their souls and bodies need Thy twofold healing
 To cure their ill :
Then give Thy servants, with Thy bounteous dealing,
 The double skill.

NOWHERE is it possible for dispensing work to be more interesting than in China. Whether in the small room in a mission compound, or under a big banyan-tree in some village, or on a wet day within the sacred precincts of a heathen temple, there is a constant mingling of the pathetic, tragic, and comic side of life.

One hot summer morning the air seemed

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

literally to stand still; teaching had been trying work, and the babies had been more than usually fretful (for the Bible-women are allowed to have one child, if under three years of age, with them in the training-school); and as Mrs. Somers crossed the garden to the dispensary she felt it was a great relief to change work for a time, though the heat remained the same or even increased—if such a thing were possible.

The catechist, longing for some souls to awaken from their heathen sleep, had been preaching most earnestly to the people in the waiting-room of the dispensary, as they assembled, waiting for the lady missionary. Mrs. Somers was not a fully qualified doctor, but had been a trained nurse for many years, and had studied dispensing, massage, and midwifery. Her treatment of cases had been very successful, and had brought large numbers of

DISPENSING

patients to the dispensary, which was opened daily.

The voice of the catechist ceased, and all looked up as Mrs. Somers, smiling brightly, passed through to the little consulting-room, to which the patients were admitted one by one.

The first to enter was a deaf old woman who thought that lead, or stone with a string attached to it, could be pushed down through her ears into her throat to clear a passage for the sound to go through to her head.

The missionary explained to her that the drum of the ear was a very sensitive organ, and rough usage would make her deaf for ever. She replied, 'When I first became deaf I tried to cure myself. I made a hole in a pea and put a string through it ; and when the pea hardened I very often pushed it down my ear as far as it would go and then pulled it back by the string,

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but it never made me hear any better. If *you* could push it all the way, *that* would clear the passage !’

‘How old are you ?’ asked Mrs. Somers.

‘Oh, very old ; ten sevens have gone over my head ; this stupid one has lived too long.’

‘Then I am afraid I cannot help you,’ said Mrs. Somers.

‘Well, anyway, I want some medicine for my leg, it’s all open,’ and she disclosed a terrible sore down the shin-bone. After carefully cleaning the sore, Mrs. Somers let the old lady depart, well pleased with some ointment to put on the leg, and a bottle of medicine to take besides.

In the waiting-room the old woman did not like to appear foolish, so she smiled and said, ‘Yes, truly, fat for my leg and medicine for my ear. Next week I shall

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hear well all you say, no more loud voice talk to me ! ’

The second patient was a young mother with her baby boy.

‘ What is the matter ? ’

‘ Ah, terrible, terrible ! the lamp fell on him and burnt his back, and he is my second son ; terrible trouble truly ! ’

‘ When did the lamp fall ? ’

‘ One moon and a half ago—at first only just a little place like a dollar, now very big.’

‘ Why, that is six weeks ago ; why did you not come before ? ’

‘ I had the native doctor ; but alas ! he became worse—now my money is all gone, and I come here.’

‘ Well, let me see. Put him on the table ; I must undress him. Why, the sore is very dirty, and so is the baby. I must give him a bath ; wash him all over.’

‘ My baby—a bath ! Why, he has never

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been washed since he was born. He will die.'

The mother began hastily putting on his clothes again.

'Well,' said the missionary, 'our foreign medicine does not cure well if the bodies are dirty, so I cannot do anything for him unless he is washed.'

Off hurried the little mother, excitedly exclaiming, 'Wash him! never—never.'

Then a young man came in who had met a madman the day before as the sun was sinking, and asked for some medicine to cure 'madman's bite.'

'Where did the man bite you?' inquired Mrs. Somers, looking for the necessary things to cauterize the place.

'Ah, the gods be thanked, he did not see me. His shadow fell on me, and I have had a trembling ever since and now a hot fever.'

A dose of quinine was given to him to

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take there and then, and he was advised to go home and lie down and get a good sleep, for he was more frightened than hurt.

Some real cases of disease were next attended to, and various ointments and medicines supplied. The last case was that of a middle-aged man, who entered with a little boy.

‘What do you complain of?’ asked Mrs. Somers.

‘I have a fire here’ (pointing to his breast), ‘and it burns through my back.’

‘How long have you had it?’

‘Four days ; and it is just like a mountain here on my chest,’ said the man, striking himself with his hand.

‘What have you been eating lately?’

‘Goat ; we had an old one which fell down a rock, so we ate it.’

‘When did it fall down?’

‘Yesterday.’

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‘What did you eat the day before the pain came?’

‘Yes, I ate goat.’

‘No, the day before the fire began in your back. What did you eat that day, four days ago?’

‘Why,’ said the boy who had come with the man, ‘that day we had cold fat pork and raw pickled cabbage, and at night you went to the feast of the Return Home Scholar and did not come back till late, and were asleep all the next day—the pain came to you that day; body sorry, feast too long, wine too good.’

Ah! daylight came at last. Overfeasting and indigestible food, added to a night of drinking!

Medicine to be drunk on the spot and a bottle to be carried away, with some pills to take at bedtime, were soon prepared. Then began the instructions.

‘Drink this now,’ said Mrs. Somers.

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‘Am I to drink it *now*?’ asked the man.

‘Yes, at once.’

‘Will it remove the pain and the fire in my back?’

‘I hope so,’ replied Mrs. Somers cheerfully; ‘drink it now quickly.’

‘Will the fire go out at once if I do?’

‘I hope so; drink it quickly—I want the cup.’

The man at last drinks. ‘Your medicine is very good—I suppose I pay if it cures me.’

Mrs. Somers gave him the pills and said, ‘Take these; two at night, when you lie down on your bed. This bottle you are to drink—one spoonful after morning rice, after midday rice, and after evening rice.’

‘Yes, I understand. My wife has a large boil on her neck and my mother has sore eyes—will it cure them also if they drink it?’

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Once more careful instructions were given, and the man took the bottle and turned to go ; and the boy remarked, ' You had better drink it here before you go home, or all the women will drink it and your fire pain will not be put out.'

Late that night, after all within the compound had been asleep for some time, Mrs. Somers and her husband were disturbed by great knocking at the big gates.

After some delay and much shouting the watchman came upstairs to say a baby boy was dying, and the parents wanted the foreign doctor to come and wash it at once. It was the baby that had been brought to the dispensary earlier in the day.

The missionaries were soon ready to start, and for a couple of hours they used all the remedies love and skill could devise to save that young life.

The pastor, who had been teaching

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and talking sympathetically to the father of the child and the other men of the household, suggested, when hope seemed almost gone, that he should pray to the one true God and ask Him to save the little one's life. Mrs. Somers arranged to stay with the mother for several hours until the crisis was over, while her husband returned to the mission house. Early in the morning the baby fell asleep and the danger was past. For a week or two the baby boy was visited daily until he was quite restored.

Mr. Ma, the father, began calling to see Mr. Somers, and often they walked up and down the grass in the moonlight, or sat in the pastor's study, talking of God and things divine. Slowly the heart of Mr. Ma opened and took in the glorious truth of the gospel, and he became a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Three months later he asked to be re-

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ceived as a catechumen, and after some waiting and testing was baptized and became a great strength and help to the city church and a beloved friend of the pastor and of Church Uncle Lo.

CHAPTER IV

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Yea, in Thy Name we will arise and free them,
Jesus, Thou Son of God, who givest rest;
Thy Name the charm that breaks their souls' long bondage,
Thy Name the answer to their hearts' long quest.

WEEKS flew by ; and as the city work was in a more prosperous condition by reason of the earnest zeal of the lay helpers, and the mission work of the compound was now well in hand, Mr. Somers felt he must begin his itinerating work among the other congregations and churches in the district committed to his care. It was hard to say good-bye to his young wife, but it had to be said, and the face of the pastor was very grave as he greeted the Christians who had assembled to see him

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start. He was leaving his wife alone ; no other European lived in this city of thirty thousand Chinese, and he would be away three weeks, and so much might happen in that time over and above the ordinary trials and difficulties of the work. It was therefore a great trial for them both to be parted : yet the promise came to cheer their hearts, 'Lo ! I am with you all the days.'

The chair-coolies passed through the first gate, and at the same moment Mrs. Somers came out of the house with her dogs dancing about her, and stood beside her husband as he gave last instructions to those gathered around him. He told 'Stupid Head,' the good-natured cook, to take great care of 'the Lady,' and to remember he was especially responsible for her safety. The catechist also was charged to help her in every way possible. Then the pastor turned to the watchman,

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who was a comparatively new comer, and said impressively, 'The eye of God never sleeps; when you watch through the night, the eye of God also sees you and watches you; see you always do your duty.'

As Mr. Somers turned, the two dogs sprang eagerly forward, thinking they were going for a walk, but he told them to go back and take care of their mistress till he returned. Mrs. Somers had already bidden her husband farewell indoors, so with a last loving glance into her face and a quick grasp of her hand, he passed through the big white gate, the outer gate closed with a clang, and he was gone.

Sometimes walking, sometimes riding, the missionary pursued his journey. A halt was made every hour or two, for a few minutes, to rest the coolies, who carried the chair, and the baggage-coolies carrying food, bedding, books, and everything re-

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quired for a tour of several weeks. As he travelled, his mind was full of many thoughts. This was the first time he had left his wife since their wedding, and his prayers went up for their peace and safety during his absence; but many opportunities were seized for conversing with other travellers whom he met on their way across the mountains. Thus he sought to 'sow beside all waters.' When night at last drew in, the journey was brought to a quick conclusion, and the coolies set down the chair in the courtyard of an inn, shouting and making as much noise as if some great mandarin had arrived.

'What man arrived?' asked the landlord, coming out with a pipe in his hand.

'Big man, foreign man,' said the coolie. 'The teacher is a read-book man; can you give him a room to himself to sleep in?' asked the 'Seventh Son,' Mr. Somers's

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own servant, who always travelled with him, and whose duty it was to make all arrangements and prepare meals, and pack, and pay wherever his master went.

‘This way,’ replied the landlord; and calling a man, they began to move ploughs and other farming implements out of a small room, then a goat and a few fowls were chased out, then they carried in a couple of chairs, a native bed, and a small table. The room was quickly swept over, and the dust of many weeks rose in dense clouds, which would take hours to settle again. Then the guest was invited to enter and rest. All these preparations had collected a crowd around, so while ‘Seventh Son’ unpacked and prepared a meal the missionary had some conversation with the onlookers.

‘He speaks our words very even,’ said one man. ‘Stranger, where do you live?’

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‘In your country do all men dress their hair like prisoners?’ inquired another.

‘How little material he has for his clothes!’ remarked a man whose garments were long and his finger-nails also, showing he was a scholar and did not work.

‘Stranger,’ asked an old man, ‘at what age did you marry, that you have a grandchild already?’ noticing that Mr. Somers had a moustache, for men in China never wear moustaches until they are proud grandfathers.

‘I am only married two moons and a half,’ replied Mr. Somers, ‘but in my country men wear a moustache as soon as they can grow one. It is considered a good fashion.’ This raised a laugh, and the conversation became very friendly and continued until ‘Seventh Son’ announced supper was ready.

Mr. Somers bowed his head, asked for help and blessing, and began eating.

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‘ Why, he eats our way,’ was the pleased remark of one of the crowd.

‘ What better way could he eat ? Don’t all people eat the same way ? ’ replied the old man who had spoken before.

After supper Mr. Somers asked the landlord’s permission to address the crowd, which gradually increased as the villagers got to know there was a foreigner within. Standing on a table, brought out for him and placed in the courtyard, so that every one could hear, he began to tell them that the conversation he had heard while eating reminded him of many countries he had travelled in. The manners in all these countries were quite different. But he had learnt that all people have some things in common.

‘ Stranger, how many small islands are there outside our Middle Kingdom ? ’ eagerly interrupted the old man.

‘ There are many countries and many

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islands beyond the hands and the feet to count,' replied Mr. Somers, 'but the people who live in these countries all think in their hearts one anxious thought, Where shall we go when we die? Our generation will pass away; we shall go—where? where? where? They do not know—they would like to know in order to prepare, but they do not know.'

The tears were streaming down the faces of two old men. The missionary was much touched—he had never seen a Chinese weep before—and eagerly he went on to tell of God's love to sinners, of Christ's sacrifice for sin, and of Christ the Way—the way that leads into the kingdom of light where sorrow, sin, and death do not come. Sin leads to darkness, but Christ is the Way that leads to God and to light. Those who believe in this God and give up sin do not fear, for they know where they will go—even to be with the



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God whom they loved and served on earth. Many questions were asked, and the men listened until the landlord came up ; he had been very patient, but the time to fasten up had come.

As the missionary went into his room, an old man followed him, who turned out to be the landlord's father, and one of the men so much touched during the preaching. The cocks had begun to crow, and the daylight crept in, before he left the room. He had been learning something of this new religion, heard for the first time, which would bring light to his soul.

When Mr. Somers rose, a couple of hours later, the old man came to him again. 'Stranger, your words seem to suit me. Come again soon. I am old ; I would learn the way before I pass over.'

The missionary went on his way, having sown in one heart the seed which was to grow up unto Eternal Life.

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The next night he slept in the 'prophet's chamber' over the vestry at the back of the church at the 'Empty River-bed' Village, so called because the main village path ran parallel with the bed of a river that had long since ceased to flow.

The coolies carried the loads up to the loft, but before anything could be unpacked the catechist was heard climbing up the ladder.

After the usual greetings, he spoke of the work as most encouraging. He had heard of the prayer-meeting at Fountain Bridge City, and had begun to pray that at Empty River-bed Village also there might be showers of blessing. One or two of the Christians came in every morning to pray with him, before going to the fields to labour.

The pastor heard this report with thanksgiving, and later in the evening he went into the church, where about thirty Chris-

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tians had assembled, who listened with great attention to a short address. He had prayed for special guidance in the choice of a subject, and spoke from our Lord's words, 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' He drew out the qualities which Christians should possess in order to influence and permeate the world around, closing with a special appeal for the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit to descend there and then, in their midst; and in the prayer-meeting which followed the old catechist suddenly stood up in his place and brokenly said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place—this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

The next morning at five o'clock a few church members met for further prayer and teaching. One candidate was examined for baptism, but kept back for another visit because he had not yet had courage to witness publicly for Christ; after which

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they gathered round the Lord's Table, and then, wonderfully strengthened and encouraged, Mr. Somers went on his way.

Two days later he arrived at the 'Red Tiger' Village. The heavy rains through which he had been travelling for forty-eight hours had ceased, and the brilliant glory of an Eastern sun lighted up the huge red tiger-shaped rock from which the village took its name. The missionary went straight to the house of an old Christian and his wife, who a few months previously had left Fountain Bridge City and taken up their residence in this village, the former home of his wife. The old lady having come into some property, they decided to settle down there, though it had meant giving up a great deal, as there were no other Christians in the village. But Mr. and Mrs. Tang felt that perhaps through them God would bring light to others, and that the few fields that had

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lately become Mrs. Tang's through the death of a relative might be God's 'open door' through which the 'Good News' religion would enter Red Tiger Village.

Mr. Tang had been looking forward to this visit of Mr. Somers ever since they had left the city. After a very hearty greeting, and after the usual hospitalities had been offered and accepted, Mr. Tang went out to ask some of his neighbours to come and hear the good news brought by his friend from a far country. A few promised to come, but many refused. The head man of the village was very angry, and said the foreigner was probably a spy from Japan, as China was then at war with Japan. The report quickly spread that a Japanese spy had arrived to spend the night, and that he was lodging in the house of Mr. Tang.

A great crowd quickly gathered and soon surrounded the house. Mrs. Tang

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took an old Chinese jacket and a pair of trousers and a Chinese hat to the missionary and told him to put them on and she would open the back door and let him out as soon as Mr. Tang had attracted all the people to the front of the house.

The people surged round the house ; some brought tridents, others guns or sticks, and waved these excitedly in the air. Mr. Tang started arguing with the people in the front of the house, and those at the back soon went to see what was going on there. Mrs. Tang seized the opportunity to open the door and let the missionary escape. After about five minutes, the people, refusing to be kept out any longer, forced the door and rushed in, though Mr. Tang tried hard to prevent them, and delayed their search as much as possible to enable his pastor to have a good start before they discovered he had gone.

In the confusion the coolies had also

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been able to escape, and met their master a short distance away, and, heathen though they were, they thanked God for their deliverance. In their eagerness to leave Red Tiger Village far behind them, they left the main road and travelled some miles in a different direction. It was very dark, and neither moon nor stars were visible to guide them on their way ; so in this case they thought it wiser to stop at the first inn they found and ask to have accommodation for the night. The landlord took them in and was very kind. They said nothing of the rough treatment they had received at the Red Tiger Village. The next morning Mr. Somers asked leave to tell the good news at the village well, which was just outside the inn.

The landlord gave permission. Had not the foreigner paid his bill—heavy indeed ! for the accommodation—and paid without comment or remark ? Surely he must be

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a good man, and might he not desire to stay another night if well treated?

When the men began to move about and go out to the fields to work and the women came to fetch water for boiling the breakfast rice, Mr. Somers talked with them at the well.

‘Ah, how even he speaks our words,’ exclaimed one.

‘They pour like water out of his stomach,’ said another.

‘Teacher, can the God you speak of be the same as our Pearly Emperor,’ said the third.

‘Alas! stupid one, empty of all knowledge, why should you speak? Know you not he speaks of Heaven and Earth, that in our country we have worshipped for hundreds of years, but in his country they have only just heard of, hence his zeal! Silence, my brothers; let us hear how much he knows.’ So spoke a cynical

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middle-aged man, the pride of the village, for was he not the proud possessor of a degree ?

‘Teacher,’ inquired a quiet-looking man, ‘have you often been in prison ? I see your hair has not fully grown yet.’

‘My master is a foreigner,’ indignantly exclaimed the ‘Seventh Son,’ ‘and they all wear short hair—my master is also a learned man of many degrees.’

Then another man spoke. ‘Teacher, did your country-people send you here because you had done something wrong ?’

‘No, not so,’ replied the missionary ; ‘they sent me to tell you of a God that loves you and all mankind.’

‘What trade have you—do you come to buy tea or silk ?’

‘Neither ; I have no trade, my brother, but I come to bring you good news.’

‘You are not a farmer, you could not leave your crops, nor yet a trader—and

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'we also know you are not a monk, for your head is not shaved. Teacher, how do you live?'

'None of these ideas are mine; in coming to you I have only one thought, to tell you of my God who loves you and all men—who made the world and all in it, who desires all men to love Him and become His servants, and to live free from sin and selfish indulgence.'

Here the literary man could not keep silence, though he had told the others to do so, and said: 'To do this, who is able? Even Confucius taught good words such as these.'

But the missionary went on in answer: 'God loved the people of this world, and knowing they were sinners and unable to do right, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die for them, and also to show men how to live holy lives. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ obtains pardon of sin, and

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also grace to do His will and follow Him. Such will obtain the favour of God, peace in their hearts, comfort in their death, and heaven at last.'

'Ah, teacher, speak these words more plainly ; make them more clear to our minds, that we too may have no fear when we pass over our generation,' remarked the thoughtful man.

Just then a passer-by cried out, 'The Japanese spy ! the Japanese spy ! Kill him ! kill him !'

'Are you Japanese ?' inquired several men at once.

'No, I am an Englishman—English country and China country are good friends,' said the missionary.

'He is a Japanese spy,' cried the man vehemently ; 'he was in our village yesterday—and we tried to kill him, but he ran away.'

The crowd became very angry, and

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pushed towards the missionary, nearly knocking him over.

The 'Seventh Son' went to the landlord of the inn to ask for help to save his master, but he refused any assistance.

Several of the villagers had sticks and began to flourish them, one man bringing his stick heavily down on the shoulders of Mr. Somers. Stones were also thrown.

Close by was one of the refuse-pits so prevalent in China, and many voices cried: 'Push him into the pit—he will never spy again; it is the proper place for such as he. He will never deceive us again with his country and his God and his religion.' But just then the thoughtful man who had listened so well pushed his way in, and roughly seizing Mr. Somers, whispered in the tumult: 'Let go your coat when I fall and so impede the progress of the crowd, then run straight over the field and round the corner of the hill;

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your servants are waiting. I will follow soon.'

The man threw himself down, and in the confusion that followed Mr. Somers undid his coat and with a quick twist left it in the hands of those who had been holding him, running quickly in the direction pointed out by his friendly ally.

The coolies, who had removed the sedan-chair when the riot began, instantly shouldered the chair and hastened on, while Mr. Somers thanked God for his second wonderful escape.

His kind deliverer followed him to the next village, having calmed the fears of his friends. He stayed until the missionary left, listening to all that went on and asking many questions about this 'comfort-giving Good News,' as he called the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the village there was a native pastor in charge of a small church

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who arranged for him to come over regularly for further talk.

Mr. Somers felt quite sorry to leave, but much work lay between him and Fountain Bridge City; and at the One Tree Village, where he stayed next, hardly had he reached his room when the catechist arrived, excited and eager.

‘Peace, Pastor, peace; God has caused the teacher to come just when Satan was trying to defeat us. Will the Pastor come at once.’

As they went out together Mr. Sing told of the casting out of a devil from a man which had taken place the night before. The relatives of the possessed man had first sent for the Buddhist monks, and they had failed to relieve him. The Taoist priests, who were next consulted, equally failed; and as a last resource the relatives had sent for the Christian catechist. Having all the idols taken away and burnt

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and the room swept thoroughly, he told them of the God able to conquer devils ; for strong as demons were, the true God was stronger still ; and having explained prayer to them, he prayed to God, laying hands on the sick man. Two other Christians were with him and joined their prayers with his, and then he commanded the devils to depart. And the man, who had been for hours tossed and tormented, who had been chained and held by two or three men for fear of what he might do to himself and others if free, now lay quite still.

The catechist gave medicine, and prayed again before he left, and that day he had been in several times and prayed and taught in the house ; but afterwards the relatives had brought in another idol and the man had become violent again.

By this time they had reached the house, and both went in. The missionary talked to the people and prevailed on them to

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bring out the idol and burn it, to the great dismay of the family from whom it had been borrowed ; but as no terrible result followed, all the villagers were astonished, and wondered why the god did not strike them dead for the rash deed. The missionary and catechist returned to the room, and, while preaching to the family and others who had come in, it was noticed that when Jesus and His saving power were exalted the sick man became more violent. The pastor, having finished preaching, went forward and put his hand solemnly upon the sick man and prayed to God for the sake of Jesus Christ to cause the devil to leave the man and come no more into him. At once the convulsions ceased, and the man became quiet ; and the chains by which he had been secured were undone. The missionary then ordered a meal to be quickly prepared and placed before him, as he had been so long without food. The

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man appeared very weak, so Mr. Somers ordered him to be fed very frequently, and the catechist undertook to see to this and to sit up all night in order to keep him quiet.

From this time the man grew stronger, and when well became an earnest catechumen, and a year later, when the missionary revisited the village, he was baptized.

Thus day by day Mr. Somers travelled on from station to station, exhorting, reproving, encouraging catechists, schoolmasters, and native Christians. Daily he realized to the full the wondrous power of God,—that ‘they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.’

At last, the day before he was expected home, he arrived at the next village, where

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he intended to stay the night ; and finding that the catechist had already gone into the city to see him, as it was about midday, he decided to travel on, and arrived about ten o'clock outside the walls of Fountain Bridge City, not many yards from his own house. The gate had been shut for hours, but under the wall near the mission house he gave a loud whistle. The dogs heard, and gave a bark of welcome, which surprised Mrs. Somers. She was quickly up, and, slipping into her dressing-gown, opened the verandah shutters. Again the whistle came, and again the dogs barked excitedly ; and then she realized what the sound meant and excitedly called the watchman, telling him to wake up quickly the men who had charge of the water-gate. The gate was lifted up from the stream that flowed under the city wall, and within half an hour Mr. Somers was safe in his own house.

‘Welcome Brother’ and ‘Stupid Head’ prepared a meal for their master while he enjoyed the luxury of a bath, and then came into the dining-room, where he found his wife eagerly awaiting him.

How glad she was to have him safe back and the terrible suspense ended! Her heart was almost too full for words, for the loneliness had been nearly unbearable.

The lamp on the supper-table was placed so that the light fell full on her husband’s face, while her chair was pushed back farther into the shadow. As she gazed at him she felt that some great events must have taken place since they had parted, for traces of them were visible in his countenance.

Supper over, Harold told his wife the story of his tour and how God had twice delivered him from death. Together they praised God for His help in time of need,

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and together they prayed for His blessing upon the seed sown day by day. Midnight was long past before they retired, for both had much to tell and to hear;

CHAPTER V

THE LEPERS OF THE HOLLOW

To Thee they went—the blind, the dumb,
The palsied and the lame,
The leper with his tainted life,
The sick with fevered frame.

To hands that work and eyes that see
Give wisdom's heavenly lore,
That whole and sick, and weak and strong,
May praise Thee evermore.

It was a morning in spring. The scene from the top of the Red Mountain was one of great beauty. Spring seemed to be out for a holiday, dressed in all its best attire. There was a nip of freshness in the air; the young green blades of rice in the fields of the valley, and again on the many terraces of the mountain-side, danced with

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joy in the glorious sunlight ; the air was fragrant with the scent of the yellow rape, and the earth indeed seemed to be a goodly place.

It was on such a morning that Mrs. Somers, gazing from her sedan-chair, murmured almost unconsciously, ' Every prospect pleases,' and then saw kneeling in front of her a ragged, dirty, diseased, decayed-looking object. Could it actually be a living man or woman ? ' What is it ? ' she asked, turning to ' Welcome Brother,' who walked behind her chair carrying her basket containing her lunch, tea, books, and wraps.

' This is a leper-woman, Lady,' he replied.

Poor woman ! Her hands and part of her face were badly diseased, and her whole appearance so utterly repulsive that Mrs. Somers felt for the moment completely sick ; but immediately she pulled herself

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together, and getting out of her chair spoke to the woman.

‘Sister, rise—kneel not to me. I am a woman. What need have you?’ (And in her heart she said, ‘Ah, what need have you not?’)

‘Lady, I am a leper. I hear you are a foreign doctor: heal me. They say you can cure all things—open blind eyes, make lame people walk. Give me also some compassion: a clean body is all I ask.’

‘I have a little wisdom with some diseases, sister; but I know not a medicine for you.’

‘Have compassion, Lady, have compassion; heal me and I will be your slave.’

‘Sit, I entreat you, on the bank here, and let us talk together; we are both women. See, I too will sit,’ and Mrs. Somers sat down. The wind blew the odour of the poor woman’s wounds across her face, and her eye fell on the beauty of

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the valley at her feet. A little cloud had crossed the sun—the valley was now in shadow and the sweet perfume of the rape had passed away ; ‘only man is vile,’ she thought, finishing the quotation she had begun so happily a few minutes ago. She hastily rose, and, going to the basket, brought out some Chinese cakes and a few little comforts of a native character and offered them to the leper ; then sat down on the other side of her to watch her eat, praying earnestly for a message of comfort to pass on to this afflicted soul ; feeling that of all people upon God’s earth lepers surely need the comfort and help of the blessed gospel most.

She asked the woman where she lived, and heard her story, which was as follows. When quite a small child she became a leper, and was brought from the Fountain Bridge City to the leper colony in the Hollow behind the bank on which they sat.

THE LEPERS OF THE HOLLOW

There were fifty-six lepers, men, women, and children, who all lived in the Hollow. They had an allowance of so much rice per month from the people of the city, but it did not keep starvation really away. Often a week or ten days before the rice became due there was no food left. Then some of the lepers would go down into the city and torment the people by standing in the shops and keeping away customers; the shop-keepers would give them money or food to make them leave; thus they supplied their need till the rice day came round again.

Mrs. Somers then told the poor woman her reason for coming to China and leaving her own people and country. She wished to bring the happy news, known in her own land, to the women of China. She then went on to say that her medical skill was very limited; but although she could not cure leprosy, yet she could bring them

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lotions to wash the sores, and cooling ointments to put on, which would make them more comfortable ; and above all, she could bring them the ' Happy News ' Religion, which, if they believed it, would make them happy in this life, and when they ' passed over their generation ' they would go to a country where they would have clean bodies and be no longer lepers. There they would be happy for ever in the presence of the great compassionate Father of all.

' Come, come quickly, and tell this wonderful news in our Hollow,' exclaimed the woman. So Mrs. Somers went to the Leper Village instead of to the village she had intended visiting, and spent the time teaching the lepers the way of life.

When she returned home and told her husband of her day spent with the lepers, he was full of sympathy and helpful suggestions. They went together to the

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Hollow the following week. The moment he appeared in the Hollow the pastor was quickly surrounded by such of the male lepers as could walk; and by his great sympathy soon won their confidence and goodwill, so that suggestions made by him were readily accepted by the more active lepers, who promised to carry them out.

One man, called 'Far from Heaven,' who was more intelligent than the rest, and had less outward appearance of leprosy, was appointed by Mr. Somers to act as assistant to Mrs. Somers, in giving out medicines, lotions, and ointments, and in seeing that her orders were carried out during her absence. He rapidly became a valuable helper. After a few lessons he could wash a wound and apply ointment and bandages most successfully. This gave him a new interest in life, and he became more tidy and clean in appearance, until

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he really looked like the medical student his new duties had made him.

The pastor arranged that Mrs. Somers should go up to the Hollow to teach the women and children and dispense medicine once a week, and that he or the catechist should accompany her whenever possible and hold a service for the men.

Soon a change came over the leper village of the Hollow. Cleanliness took the place of dirt, for a present of some lime and whitewash led the men who could manage it to try the experiment of whitening their own houses, and afterwards they undertook to do the same to the houses of those lepers who were unable to use their hands. A lady in England sent money to build a little shed for dispensing in and a private room for Mrs. Somers to rest in. It was arranged in such a way that the sides could easily be wound up, and thus the shed was turned into a

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mission room, in which to teach after dispensing the medicines. It combined fresh air with shelter overhead from the heat of the sun, or the fall of rain.

Mrs. Somers grew to love the afternoon which she spent among the lepers. When possible the pastor accompanied his wife and took the service. The catechist also often went ; but her faithful coolie 'Welcome Brother,' now an earnest Christian, always went with Mrs. Somers and watched over her with special care, for many of the lepers took a long time to realize that they must not steal things belonging to others, and that the compassion and love which led these foreigners to minister to them in their defilement and need must not be imposed upon. An account of the first visit to the Hollow was sent home by Mrs. Somers and printed in a magazine ; this touched the hearts of two ladies, who decided to send the money realized by

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the sale of some of their sketches to build a church in the Hollow. In this House of God 'the love that gave Jesus to die' was preached, and this love entered into the hearts of the lepers, transforming their lives from sorrow and sighing into patience and thanksgiving.

From week to week Mrs. Somers could see the interest growing and deepening, and her heart rejoiced, and those who helped her rejoiced with her as they saw God's work prospering in their midst.

'Far from Heaven' seemed to accept salvation very definitely; and when he asked for baptism, Mrs. Somers suggested his Christian name should be Luke—because he helped so much in the medical work. He also helped in the leper Sunday school which had been started, thus giving evidence of his faith by his works.

Afterwards others were gathered in. One day, months later, after much testing



CHINESE SEATED AT A MEAL



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and preparation, ten adult lepers and three children were baptized by Mr. Somers in the little church of the Hollow, signed by him with the sign of the Cross in token that they should henceforth fight manfully under Christ's banner to their lives' end ; and as the last four to be baptized went back to their places—' Great Faith,' who could not walk, being carried back by ' Rescue Grace,' and ' Charity,' whose wide-open eyes would never again see in this world, being led by ' Mary '—the whole congregation joined in singing :

O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God.
Well may this glowing heart rejoice
And tell its rapture all abroad.
Happy day, Happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.
He taught me how to watch and pray
And live rejoicing every day.
Happy day, Happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.

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‘Hallelujah! I’ll not be a leper in heaven,’ shouted Great Faith, the tears rolling down his scarred face and the glory of God shining in his eyes.

‘Truly there are no lepers in heaven,’ said the pastor. ‘The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.’

Mrs. Somers looked across at her husband, with tears in her eyes, when she heard these words; and as they went back to the city, the refrain of the hymn which they had just sung kept ringing in their own hearts:

Happy day, Happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away,

CHAPTER VI

THE FAITH OF MRS. DING

O Jesu, Master, let me hold
Such secret fellowship with Thee,
That others careless once and cold
Won to my God and theirs may be.

‘GLADYS, the alarum has rung; it is half-past two, my darling,’ said Harold Somers, early one morning to his sleeping wife.

‘Oh dear! I am so sleepy; but I shall wake up in a moment,’ she replied.

By a quarter-past three they were breakfasting on coffee (considered to be a good antidote to malaria), boiled eggs, and toast. As soon as breakfast was over Mrs. Ding entered the room. Mrs. Somers and Mrs. Ding had been invited to a distant town,

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twelve hours' journey away ; and by making an early start, passing through the city gates as soon as they were opened, they would be able to accomplish a good part of the journey before the sun's heat became too intense for either comfort or safety.

The pastor committed them in prayer to God, pleading that in all their work God alone might be glorified in the sight of the heathen. Then they entered the sedan-chairs which were ready at the door.

It was not yet four o'clock ; the mists hung over the mountain-tops as if unwilling to leave, and the sun was struggling through thick banks of cloud in the eastern sky. Having started so early, they would be at the river crossing before it was uncomfortably hot. Every minute the sun's power grew stronger ; mists cleared, and one of the loveliest days of a Chinese spring

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opened before them. Large dog-roses, three or four inches across, stood out pure and white with the dew-drops glistening upon them. The spring ferns laid themselves limply down on the banks, a brilliant red ; single gardenias and orange-blossoms perfumed the air with their sweet fragrance.

By eleven o'clock they had reached the river, where a ferry-boat took them, in their chairs, across to the other side ; and here they had their midday meal, which the servants prepared with wonderful quickness and care. After this the road became more mountainous, and just before sunset they arrived at their destination, and immediately went to the house of Mrs. Wong. This lady had lately been on a visit to some relatives living in Fountain Bridge City, and while there had come in touch with Mrs. Somers and her Bible-woman, who had often visited her friends ; and these relatives had taken

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her to see the missionary and the training-home where Mrs. Ding was matron, and Mrs. Wong had asked them both to visit her in her own home.

They were loudly announced by the watchman at the entrance, then 'Welcome Brother' entered first to make known their arrival in the house, and returned, escorted by Mr. Wong and some of his sons. The visitors were warmly welcomed, and were taken at once to the women's guest-room, where tea and pipes were handed to them, and they gladly accepted the tea. When a meal had been served, all the household were called together to hear the 'Message of Peace,' as Mrs. Wong called the teaching she had heard in Fountain Bridge City. After much questioning and irrelevant talk about the strange lady's eyes, dress, hair, complexion, &c., which always occurs when a new place is visited, at last the two visitors began to

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tell them why they had come, and of the good news they had brought.

All were much interested, and asked frequent questions ; then the men of the household went away, and Mrs. Somers suggested they should retire for the night. When they were just falling asleep, a knock made Mrs. Ding jump up and open the door. To her surprise a woman stood there, asking if Mrs. Wong might come to hear more of the Peace message. The two visitors hastily put on some clothing, and Mrs. Wong entered the room, saying, ' Pardon my sin in disturbing your slumber, but to-morrow you will depart, I fear, and I want to know more plainly the meaning of your teaching.'

' What part of our teaching is most dark to you ? ' asked Mrs. Ding.

' How do you and this teacher know what has been in my heart ? ' she replied. ' You have said I was afraid of

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my words and deeds ; I was afraid of the passing over of my generation [death]. I was sad in my heart and found no rest of spirit. Who told you all this of my thought ? I have told no person ; this troubled me—who can have told you ? ’

‘ Now God be praised,’ said Mrs. Ding ; ‘ no one has told us, but we know God has said, “ All have sinned.” All men are wicked ; and unless the Sinless Saviour, Jesus Christ, by His sacrifice put away sin, we must all perish. “ There is no peace,” saith God, “ to the wicked.” Before I knew the true God I felt just like you—no rest of heart. I found the idols could not save me ; though I sacrificed to them, I had no peace ; always I was sad and afraid. Then I heard of Jesus the Peace-giver, and I trusted in Him and believed His word, and peace—big peace—came to my heart. Now I am not afraid.’

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All the time that Mrs. Ding was talking Mrs. Somers prayed, and thus in turn for several hours these two women spoke of Jesus and His great salvation. Mrs. Ding suggested all should pray together ; and as the sun began to light the world outside, so the dawn of Christ's salvation came into the heart of Mrs. Wong. Dimly she saw that day 'men like trees walking' ; but the light continued to spread, and the day came when she could say, 'Once I was blind, now I can see ; and the Light of my soul is Jesus.'

When rice had been eaten the next morning, the household again gathered to hear the new doctrine. Many people from the town called in order to see the foreign lady. The hours passed so quickly that Mr. Wong pressed them to stay another night under his 'mean roof.'

To this they gladly consented, but arranged with 'Welcome Brother' to leave

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at dawn the following morning. Mrs. Ding was exceedingly happy ; as they retired that night she remarked to Mrs. Somers, ' I have prayed every day for Mrs. Wong, ever since we met her in Fountain Bridge City, and now God has answered my prayer. Let us pray for her husband and family.' They prayed very earnestly, and then slept soundly, for the journey and the preceding wakeful night had made them weary.

In the meantime Mr. Somers had passed an anxious night in Fountain Bridge City.

At sunset the day after they had started he had gone forth to meet them, but after walking some distance returned home thinking they might have returned some other way. After nightfall he knew they could not return, and he spent the whole night in prayer ; and again on the third day he started about the same time. When he

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had been walking two hours, to his great joy he heard a sound of singing in the valley. Mrs. Somers, with Mrs. Ding and 'Welcome Brother,' were singing in Chinese,

We shall come rejoicing,
Bringing in the sheaves.

After the greetings were over, the missionary walked close by his wife's chair—his hand in hers—as he tenderly inquired why they had delayed their return. Home was soon reached, and all three entered the study to talk over the wonderful story more fully. Mrs. Ding exclaimed, 'The Lord hath opened the eyes of the blind—Mrs. Wong's heart is seeking the Saviour. God be greatly praised !'

'Yes,' went on Mrs. Somers, 'I trust she does see, although, as you can understand, dimly at present, but she seems to feel her need ; she is seeking for her Saviour, and Jesus is seeking for His lost

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sheep. She will come out clearly some day.'

Once again they knelt in prayer, returning thanks to God for answered prayers, for journeying mercies, and for so much blessing bestowed upon their labours. Mrs. Ding went off to tell the good news to the women in the training-home, and left Mrs. Somers alone with her husband ; and as he settled her cosily in an easy-chair to rest until supper time, he told her how very anxious he had been the night before, and how thankful he was to have her safe back.

'Won't it be grand,' said Gladys, 'if the Wong family become Christians? They have invited us up again next moon, and then we must ask Mr. and Mrs. Wong to come and stay with us later on.'

'Yes, darling,' replied her husband ; 'but how would you like me to take you up next moon instead of Mrs. Ding?'

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‘Could you?’ questioned Gladys, her voice and face telling him plainly enough how much she would like such an arrangement.

‘I think so; I am anxious to take you on to Mountain Top Village for a Sunday. There no woman can attend church, as there is no Bible-woman, and the catechist is unmarried. I thought we might take this visit to Mr. and Mrs. Wong on our way to Mountain Top Village.’

‘That would be delightful,’ she replied, ‘and I could take Mercy with me. She is the new Bible-woman, who is not engaged for the remainder of the year, and if you think well we could leave her there for six months to teach the women.’

CHAPTER VII

THE BUDDHIST MONK AND THE TRACT

My intellect, Thy gift to me,
O let me use Thy gift for Thee ;
My thoughts and pen, Lord, let them move
To tell the world Thy dying love.

MRS. SOMERS was teaching the tract-class one Friday afternoon in the women's school. Bible and other lessons for the week were over, and this was the last class of the week.

On Sunday mornings a Christian tract was always given out for the second and third years' women to read and talk over with Mrs. Somers the following Friday afternoon. This made the women familiar with various simple tracts, and when out in the villages later, working as Bible-

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women, they had some knowledge of the tracts they carried, and were able to give or sell them with some discretion.

This reading and talking them over week by week also made them familiar with a variety of ways of putting truth which was helpful to their future work.

‘ You have all been reading this tract ; now I want you to tell me about it,’ said Mrs. Somers. ‘ Faith, tell me the subject of the tract.’

‘ Sin is the subject of this tract,’ replied the woman.

‘ What can you tell me about it, Grace ? ’

‘ Two men are talking of the gospel,’ she replied.

‘ What can you remember, Mercy ? ’ asked Mrs. Somers.

‘ One man is a believer in Jesus and the other man is a heathen ; the believer is trying to open the heathen man’s mind, which is

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very dark, to the truth that he is a great sinner,' replied Mercy.

'Does the heathen man quickly see that he is a sinner, Patience?' pursued Mrs. Somers.

'Truly no, Lady; the believer has to speak very plainly, as the darkness of the heathen mind is very great and his heart is very cold,' she replied.

'Ruth, tell me the result of the conversation of the two men.'

'After talking together many evenings the heathen man cannot sleep: one night, his mind wakes up and his heart is troubled,' said Ruth.

'Mary, tell me what the heathen man does to rid himself of the burden of sin.'

'He goes to his friend,' said Mary, 'who once more explains to him that the way of salvation from sin and from the burden of sin is by believing in Jesus Christ, who

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paid the penalty for all sinners when He died upon the cross.'

Mrs. Ding, the matron, passing through the room at the moment, Mrs. Somers asked her to sum up the teaching of the tract. The class was then closed, with a prayer for those who wrote tracts that God the Holy Spirit would help them in writing; for those who read the tracts that many might be led to know and love the one true God and Jesus Christ His Son through reading; and for those societies who far away in other lands took trouble to collect money to pay for the printing and publishing of the tracts—thus they had some part and lot in bringing the knowledge of God to the heathen.

As Mrs. Somers crossed the compound, 'Stupid Head' came to her saying, 'A Buddhist monk and another man are in the guest-room; they asked for you, Lady.'

Mrs. Somers at once entered the guest-

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room and found a middle-aged man, dressed rather like a shopkeeper, and a younger man of about thirty years of age, a Buddhist monk.

The monk, after greetings were over, told Mrs. Somers she had visited his monastery with her husband and had given him a tract ; the foreign teacher had also given tracts to the other monks. Some of the monks could read, and read all the tracts which had been left. Others could not read at all, but he had read all the tracts and had been much interested. He could not understand all he read, however, and went on to say that his mind had been much disturbed, and he had been to Chief City to inquire for the foreigners who had visited the monastery, and after several days' delay he had found out that they lived at Fountain Bridge City.

This being so, he had asked for permission from the Abbot to visit his relatives

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among the hills where they grow noted tea, and had ventured to bring a few leaves for the Lady to accept.

When at home he had produced his tract, and talked to his uncle, who was the head of his household, and his uncle had also had a book on the same One-true-God religion. His uncle would explain the rest.

Mr. Ming, the uncle, said: 'A man one day in the sixth moon came to our village carrying a load of books. Under the banyan-tree in the middle of our village amongst the hills he stopped, and having refreshed himself by drinking our Number One good tea, he began to preach and read from books he put upon the table. He spoke well of many things—of a God who made all men, the world and all therein, even our Ancient Country, and told us this God was the All-powerful, One-true God. He said many things very interesting ; no

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one tell us all these things before. After a long time preaching, he sell books and I buy one, and read all the same doctrine about "One-true God." My nephew come home one day last moon with another book—same doctrine words; meanings in these books very deep. We invite the foreign lady to tell us very plainly the meaning in these books.'

As the pastor was away, Mrs. Somers sent for the catechist and schoolmaster, both good earnest Christians, very clear on the doctrine, and able to discuss them with men of much ability.

Meanwhile refreshments had been offered and accepted, and Mrs. Somers lingered a little telling of God's love and of His provision for poor sinners in giving His only Son Jesus to pay the sinner's debt.

When the catechist and the schoolmaster arrived, Mrs. Somers excused herself, saying supper would be served to them all at

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six o'clock, and inviting the guests to remain and rest.

During the hours that followed the visitors produced the tracts, both well known to the Christian workers, who explained the gospel more clearly on the lines the men had become used to by reading the tracts.

Supper followed, and when the church bell rang for evening prayer the visitors were told, and they both asked permission to stay for the service.

The catechist spoke on sin, and God's remedy for sin; and at the close, when leaving the church, Mrs. Somers presented two copies of St. Mark's Gospel which contained marginal explanations of things which the heathen reading for the first time would not understand.

For instance, the notes explained who the Jews, publicans, and Pharisees are, where Palestine is, &c., &c., very needful

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to be explained to those who believe China is the only country in the world—unless it be a few islands off the China coast. Such is the ignorance of the ordinary country people. No doubt in time, with so much Western learning now pouring into China, such ignorance may pass away ; but it will take some years to educate three hundred and fifty millions of Chinese in such matters.

So these two men passed on their way, having heard the Word ; many prayers followed the sowing of the seed.

It was very interesting to the pastor to learn on his return home that tracts given while they were on their honeymoon at the Middle Rock Monastery had been the means of awakening interest in the heart of this Buddhist monk.

One moon later Mr. Somers had just returned from an itinerating tour, when Mr. Ming and 'Forsaken All,' the monk,





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again appeared, and had further conversation upon the Way of Life.

On this occasion they stayed so late that the catechist put them up at the gate-house for the night.

Some months later they both came again. This time burning questions were on their lips.

‘ Could they become Christians and yet worship their ancestors ? ’ ‘ Was this God able to deliver them from evil spirits ? ’ ‘ The gospel said they must have a new heart, but what medicine could the foreigner give them to make a new heart grow ? ’ &c.

Still another visit was paid to the missionaries a few months later, and this time the Buddhist monk and his uncle were able to say that they had definitely decided to embrace the New Religion.

They were put in the catechumen class and obtained work in Fountain Bridge City, so as to be able to attend the instruction

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classes regularly, where they became most attentive learners.

It was long before they could say in faith, with full assurance, 'I believe in God the Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, who died to make atonement for my sin.' But, however, the day did come when they witnessed a good confession, and were publicly baptized.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RAIN

The glare of the land, the glare of the sea,
The glare on terrace and tower and tree,
Grew fiercer and fiercer, mercilessly :

Oh for the fall of the rain !

The streams were silent, the wells were dry,
The pitiless clouds passed slowly by,
With never a drop of rain.

THE heat had increased daily for months, and the hottest time of the long Chinese summer was trying the strength and the nerves of the strongest in the land. It is not surprising that riots and troubles so frequently arise in China during the hot season ; for often rain is much needed, and the wells are insufficient and even dry up, causing much suffering to be felt by both rich and poor alike.

For many weeks past the watchman at

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the mission compound had been ordered to give water from the mission well, which had been dug much deeper than any around ; but both Mr. and Mrs. Somers noticed the surly looks of many of the men and women who came to fetch it away.

At last one morning in July the storm they had dreaded burst upon them, and a large mob assembled demanding water, and threatening to wreck the premises if it was not supplied to them instantly. One man, evidently a ring leader, mounted a table on the other side of the street and addressed the crowd. ' Yes : the foreign devil has made his well so deep that our wells are made empty and his well draws from ours, so he has plenty of water while we die of thirst. The foreign woman-devil prevents the rain with her cloth umbrella, which she holds up when the sun shines. Bring them out and let us pull the place down.'

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Fortunately Mr. Somers was at home, and ran down to the gate and had it more securely fastened. Then mounting a ladder he spoke from the top of the wall. 'Brothers,' he cried, 'let not your anger burn within you or rest upon us. Our well is entirely at your service. Three of you may come in at a time and fill your buckets, passing out at the north gate; thus every one shall have water, from the small ones to the great, and we will enter our worship-house and pray to our God to send rain.'

The order was given, and all the women and boys in the compound quickly assembled in church, while the bell was rung to call the Christians from the streets of the city. Soon the church was full, and the missionary and catechist took it in turns to address the congregation and to offer prayer that it might please God to send rain.

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Outside the mission compound the crowd grew larger and louder, but inside the quiet church prayer rose strong in faith—faith that wrestled with God, believing firmly in His power, while the sky above was clear, without a cloud, and the sun's rays beat fiercely down. An unending stream of people passed in, three at a time, to fetch water from the mission well the whole day long. As the afternoon passed, the crowd seemed to grow denser, as they waited their turn to enter to fetch the precious water; but fortunately, though so much was drawn up, there was as yet no sign of the well becoming dry. The mere thought of what would happen to all within the compound if there should be no more water made the missionary's heart sink within him, for then the rage of the mob would expend itself on those within. Never had he striven in prayer so earnestly as he did on this day, while his hands were

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upheld by a faithful band of men and women who continued all day in prayer in the church.

About ten o'clock at night the catechist noticed bundles of straw being carried and laid down at the side of the church, and gave the alarm. At the same moment a man came with a torch to set fire to the straw ; but Mr. Ma, whose little child had been cured by Mrs. Somers some few months before, came round the street corner, and, instantly realizing what the scene meant, rushed up to the spot, and knocked the torch out of the hand of the coolie and stamped upon it. Then he shouted. ' Stay, brothers, stay, while I speak a few words. Hurt not these good people or any of their things, for they do no harm, only good deeds. Patience, brothers, and let this mean one speak. My son was dying, and I besought the idols we worship to save him, but no !

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they did not listen ; then the foreign lady came and the foreign teacher, and they gave medicine and prayed to the God they worship. After many hours their God heard, and my nearly dead son recovered and is well to-day.

‘ I now know this God answers prayer. I now pray to this God, and I believe this God will send rain. Patience, brothers, go home and sleep—in the morning cometh rain. This God gives rain in the morning. Go back to your homes ; rain cometh in the morning.’

An hour later the sighing of the wind was heard, and soon after the rain fell in torrents, and it rained incessantly for three whole days. Work was at a complete standstill. At last the fourth morning broke fair and bright, and the old church bell rang for a thanksgiving service.

After the service, at which a good many

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strangers had been present, two men stayed behind desiring to speak to the foreign lady.

‘ We want you to take our two girls and teach them to worship the true God, who answers prayer,’ they said. ‘ We will pay for their food, if you are willing. Our wives also desire to worship the true God. Can you let them come every afternoon and learn also ? ’

When there was an opportunity Mrs. Somers talked this fresh suggestion over with her husband, and it was decided that, if God opened the way for another lady-worker to come up to Fountain Bridge City, a girls’ boarding-school might be opened at once.

There was a vacant piece of land on the other side of the kitchen garden, which would form a good site for building a school ; but nothing could be arranged until the autumn, for the holidays were close at

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hand and no fresh effort could be started at present.

A loud cry later in the day startled the whole compound, and it was soon discovered that Meek Heart, the schoolmaster's little girl, had fallen off the verandah and broken her leg.

No experienced doctor was at hand to help, so Mrs. Somers hastily gave Meek Heart a little chloroform to keep her quite quiet ; and then she set the leg and put it in plaster-of-paris before the child regained consciousness.

This was the first time she had attempted to set a limb, and she felt very anxious about it, but during the weary weeks of healing Meek Heart's rebellious spirit was subdued.

One day in the autumn Mrs. Somers overheard her talking to some of the other girls in the little day school she attended. ' Yes, truly,' she said, ' my teacher-lady

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mended my leg. It was broken off just here, but the lady mended it, and now I keep on my clothes always. Yes, and I obey her words—yes, *all*, even when Satan says “Don’t” in my ear.’

Meek Heart became very fond of her ‘teacher-lady’; and though up to many pranks and full of mischief, one word or glance of reproof from Mrs. Somers was enough to make her quiet for an hour at least!

CHAPTER IX

SHADOWS

O Joy, that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee ;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

‘ I called upon the Lord in distress—the Lord answered me.’

THE whole compound was in a state of pleasurable excitement, for the much-beloved pastor was coming back from a longer itinerating journey than usual, and the Chinese Christians were so devoted to his wife that they always sympathized with her loneliness when he was away, and rejoiced in her joy when she expected him back again.

All arrangements were complete for

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starting on the following day to the Four Bamboos, a village on the top of a mountain six hours' journey from Fountain Bridge City, where Mr. and Mrs. Somers proposed to spend their summer holiday in a little house which had been built for the purpose, containing four rooms with out-buildings leaning against one end for a kitchen and rooms for the servants.

They intended visiting while there the many hamlets which lay hidden among the mountains and off the regular track of itinerating journeys. Living away from the deadening influences of city life, these hill people were easy to influence and pleasing to work amongst, once their fear of the foreigner was removed.

Mr. and Mrs. Somers were both eagerly looking forward to a time of comparative rest after the continued strain of the past year, and at the same time to doing some work for the Master.

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There was only one downcast face, and that belonged to Meek Heart, who dreaded the moment when her now much-loved teacher would leave the compound, as she would not see her again for several weeks. She had not been told that Mrs. Somers had arranged to take her to the Four Bamboos to wait upon her, in the hope that a more personal influence would prepare her to set a good example to the boarding-school which Mrs. Somers was arranging to open later in the year.

The matron and the Bible-woman were going back in the morning to their own homes for their holidays. The boys were also to be dismissed the following morning by the pastor. In twenty-four hours, if all went well, the compound would be left in charge of the catechist and the schoolmaster, the former continuing the services for the city Christians, and the schoolmaster assisting him in the evangel-



A BIBLE-WOMAN IN THE MIDST OF HER CONVERTS

SHADOWS

istic work carried on in the villages around the city during the holiday weeks.

Just before sunset Mrs. Somers, with her dogs, went for a walk on the wide city wall. The day had been a very busy one, and she felt glad of a quiet hour. The glory of the sunset, with its 'blue and purple and gold,' brought the presence of God near to her soul. She lingered watching the lights fading away, then, turning homewards as the rapid twilight gave way to darkness, she descended the steps from the wall to the little street below, which lay between the mission compound and the city wall. These steps, like those of many city walls, were rough and uneven; and about half-way down, her foot slipped on a loose stone, and she fell to the bottom. A man well known to her was talking to a friend close by, and ran quickly to assist her to rise, concerned lest she was hurt.

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But Mrs. Somers did not feel any worse for the fall, beyond a very natural shaking, and after a few moments she was able to walk home.

An hour later, however, she began to feel very ill, and hastily wrote off to her husband begging him to hurry home with all speed, and sent a coolie along the road upon which he would travel, hoping the note would reach him and thus hasten his return by a few hours.

She then sent for Mrs. Ding and Mrs. Cho, telling them what she feared, giving a few simple directions about what she might need them to do to help her, knowing so well that not only her own life, but much besides, would be in the balance the next few hours.

‘Oh, if only Harold were here to help me!’ she thought, as she made some needful preparations; but like a brave woman, while praying for his quick return, her soul

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leaned strongly on her God, and she kept herself calm by her perfect trust in Him.

No doctor lived within several days' journey, and she would be better, or perhaps dead and buried, by the time one could arrive.

'Stupid Head' and 'Welcome Brother' were told to keep boiling water always ready, and also to watch for the pastor's arrival. Mrs. Ding and Mrs. Cho promised one or other to remain with her all the time. But Mrs. Somers knew her only hope was in keeping calm. 'Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of.' 'I can lean on that,' she thought, 'and my old Keswick motto: "The platform of man's 'I cannot' is the foundation of God's 'I can.'"'

Mrs. Ding went over to the training-home, and, with the Bible-woman, knelt in prayer asking God to spare the life so dear and precious to them all.

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Slowly the hours passed on. At midnight Mrs. Ding went to relieve Mrs. Cho, and her heart died within her at the sight of Mrs. Somers lying almost as one dead, her face sadly drawn with pain ; and only with difficulty could she whisper a message for her husband if he did not come in time.

‘ Stupid Head ’ sat on the floor of the verandah with ‘ Welcome Brother ’ talking in whispers as they watched with aching hearts for the pastor’s return.

‘ These foreigners love their wives so very much, their death nearly kills them,’ said ‘ Stupid Head,’ who had lived with foreigners thirty years of his life and had ‘ observed ways,’ as he remarked one day.

‘ Yes,’ replied ‘ Welcome Brother.’ ‘ We buy another wife and soon forget ; but they—it is as if their heart were taken out of them if a wife or a husband die. Not

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often these foreigners take number two wife or number two husband.'

'Truly, a very strange thing is foreign marriage, but the "Happy Religion" makes it ever thus,' remarked 'Stupid Head.'

The night was still close, all the windows were open to the verandah, and the outside shutters were pushed wide open.

Hours passed slowly, and the sweet face of Mrs. Somers looked more and more wan and rigid. A deep shadow gathered over it, and the mouth was drawn and stiff.

Mrs. Ding prayed earnestly and did her best, but 'Stupid Head' had more experience in nursing. Every quarter of an hour a spoonful of milk with a drop or two of brandy in it was forced between Mrs. Somers's lips, as 'Stupid Head' raised her head on his bony arm and begged 'the much-beloved lady' to 'open the mouth.' 'Lady, open the mouth and

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drink. Waken, Lady, and drink ; for the Pastor's sake, Lady, swallow one or two drops.'

It was hard work, but the Chinese know what patience is more than many people ; and in this way, as he had seen other foreigners nurse, so 'Stupid Head' tried to keep her strength up.

The next morning was intensely hot, and the glare of the sun seemed to increase the trouble that was felt on all sides. The compound was hushed and still ; groups of people whispered here and there, longing urgently for the pastor's arrival. 'Welcome Brother' drew in the verandah shutters ; Mrs. Cho sat fanning the unconscious patient, now and again wiping the damp from her forehead.

Morning service had been but a prolonged prayer-meeting, where faith wrestled with God for the life which seemed now to be swiftly ebbing away. The Bible-

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women refused to leave while the uncertainty prevailed, sitting about the rooms of the training-home gazing at their bundles of luggage—some talking softly, others praying, and not a few sat down sobbing with grief.

Mrs. Ma heard in the city of the death-shadow which hung over the mission compound, and came to Mrs. Ding inquiring anxiously for particulars.

‘Weaker, nearly dead—the face knows no one,’ said Mrs. Ding.

‘Have you prayed to the Great God, Church Mother?’

‘Truly, all night we have been praying.’

‘And the great God hears not?’ asked Mrs. Ma earnestly. ‘Let us pray again more loudly,’ she added.

So they gathered again in prayer, many short petitions rising for the life so dear to them. Mrs. Ma was not yet a baptized Christian, though she was a catechumen.

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Since the recovery of her baby boy she had shown great interest in Christianity, and was being taught. The rain given in answer to prayer had strengthened her faith very much. Now her trembling voice was uplifted for the first time in public prayer.

‘ O God, who can heal when Thou pleasest, as Thou didst when the compassionate Lady cried to Thee for my little son ; O Great God, who can cause rain to come when the wells are dry and people perish with thirst ; hear our crying and have compassion upon us and upon the much-beloved Lady who is too ill to heal herself. She cannot now be doctor to her own body, but do Thou heal her and let her not die ; then will Thy worthless one become Thy slave for the rest of her life. This is my heart’s true desire ’ (the equivalent in Chinese of Amen).

The Bible-women sobbed audibly now.

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Mrs. Ma rose, and, turning to Mrs. Ding, said, 'Go quickly and see if the Great God has heard, and come again and tell us.'

Mrs. Ding crossed the compound; all around was as silent as if the work of death had really been completed.

On one verandah 'Stupid Head' still faithfully watched from afar, while 'Welcome Brother' had taken his place on the city wall opposite the western verandah, and was looking up the road by which the pastor would arrive.

On the other verandah Meek Heart had sobbed herself to sleep. Within, all was still. Mrs. Somers's life was slowly ebbing away. Having committed herself to God, she was calm and peaceful—the restless tossing was over, and a great calm had settled upon her unconscious face. Suddenly 'Welcome Brother's' voice was heard, 'He has come! He has come!'

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and running down the steps he entered the compound to be ready for any service that was wanted. A few minutes later, 'Praise God, the pastor has arrived,' was whispered around the compound, as Mr. Somers tore past every one up the stairs and entered his wife's room.

Mrs. Cho and Mrs. Ding went out, softly drew the curtains over the doors, and waited lower down the verandah to be useful if they were needed.

'Gladys, my wife, my own darling,' he whispered, 'my dearest, wake up.' She opened her eyes, and he quickly administered a restorative. In a few words she told him how to help her, but was unconscious again directly.

'God help me, how helpless I am!' he muttered, but he quickly tried to do what had been suggested, his heart leaning on God the while.

Some time later Mrs. Cho and Mrs.

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Ding took word round the compound :
'No sound must be made to waken the beloved Lady—the Pastor knew not yet if God would spare her life.'

The moment he was free Mr. Somers wrote a line and sent off 'Welcome Brother' to Chief City for a doctor.

Before sunset, to the surprise of every one, 'Welcome Brother' returned, bringing a stranger whom he had met two hours' distance from the city. He had inquired from the stranger's coolies who they were carrying, and finding he was a foreign doctor, he had sensibly delivered the note, and they had returned to Fountain Bridge City as soon as possible.

He turned out to be Dr. Lane, a new medical missionary who was learning the language in Chief City and thought he would like to spend his holidays with Mr. and Mrs. Somers at their mountain hut, if they would allow him to do so—for he and

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Harold Somers were from the same village and had known each other as boys.

Was ever such a God-sent friend !
' Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.'

When the news was spread, Meek Heart danced for joy. ' I prayed to God to make a miracle and send a doctor here,' she told every one ; ' and He has.'

' Truly,' remarked the one-eyed Church Uncle, who had been hanging round all day, full of sympathy, anxious to help if possible, ' truly, out of the mouth of a little child the Great God magnifies Himself.'

Two hours later Dr. Lane said Mrs. Somers would live ; she would need great care for days, but she would pull through.

At evening service a great congregation gathered to thank God for His mercy in hearing prayer and sparing the life of the pastor's wife.

' How they all love her !' exclaimed the

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pastor to Dr. Lane ; ‘ she has indeed been a blessing here.’

Meek Heart was much disappointed to find Dr. Lane was an ordinary flesh-and-blood sort of man. ‘ I thought he would have come straight from heaven—or risen from the dead—or something like that,’ she said dolefully ; but a sudden thought struck her—‘ Truly it was a miracle after all, like Philip, only the Spirit of the Lord caught him up in Chief City and put him down in front of “ Welcome Brother,” near Fountain Bridge City ; because it would have taken eleven days for “ Welcome Brother ” to go and return from Chief City.’

CHAPTER X

HAPPY DAYS

I thank Thee, too, that Thou hast made
Joy to abound ;
So many gentle thoughts and deeds
Circling us round ;
That in the darkest spot of earth
Some love is found.

ONE year later, when the autumn work began, two new recruits came up to Fountain Bridge City.

Millicent Hanson, who was a cousin of Mrs. Somers, had yet to learn the language ; but her companion, Edith Fitzpatrick, had been many years in China and spoke Chinese fluently.

The new school-house for girls had been built by money which Millicent had collected and sent out to her cousin the

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previous year. Miss Fitzpatrick now took charge of the school, assisted by a capable matron, who had been trained in the girls' school in Chief City. She had been married, but was now a widow at the early age of twenty-one, and very happy to find herself associated again with her former teacher, to whom she had always been much attached.

Twenty girls were already in the school, three of them the daughters of mandarins, who were eager for them to be taught to read, and willing also for them to learn Christianity—as no girl was received on any other condition.

So, having other ladies in the compound, Mrs. Somers was never again left so utterly lonely as in previous years.

The work went on most happily. Of course there were ups and downs as in other places, but a few clouds only made the sunshine seem all the brighter.

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A group of children on the schoolroom verandah were learning their catechism one Saturday afternoon. Emerald, Meek Heart, and Golden Light were discussing the words as they read them over.

Meek Heart, always a tease, was enjoying herself; for the three girls were great friends, though the other two suffered much at her hands.

They were shouting out their lesson in true Chinese style, at the top of their voices. Their 'Duty to their neighbour' was now the subject of discussion.

'Emerald,' began Meek Heart, mischief dancing in her eyes, 'do you love Precious Gem as much as you love yourself?'

'Well,' she replied slowly, 'I hope so.'

'Indeed you do not,' said Meek Heart; 'do you think you would like to give her those lovely-to-look-at flowers your father brought you yesterday, for your hair? No truly, not so, because she made a



A CHINESE LADY



A CHINESE GENTLEMAN

A collection of 20 small, stylized line drawings of various insects, including beetles, flies, and bees, arranged in a grid-like pattern.

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laughing face at your mistake in class this morning.'

'The thing is very difficult, and I hope does not belong to my duty,' remarked Emerald slowly, for she was the most thoughtful child of the three.

'Certainly if you loved her like you love yourself, would it not give you joy to do this thing?' persisted the young tease.

'I will ask "Many Blessings" Teacher, and if she says it is my duty I will try to do it, but I hope she will not speak these words.'

Then the tease turned her attention to Golden Light, who had a reputation for greediness.

'Would you give your sweet cakes to Flowering Cherry?' asked Meek Heart.

'No,' said Golden Light, with much indignation; 'she gave me no small piece even of her pumelo and her water-nuts.'

'Truly; but the lesson says "as you

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desire people to do to you, even this way must you do to them.”’

‘Now,’ continued the self-satisfied child, ‘I do not want to chop wood for Quick Silver [an older girl], but she is tired, so I am going to chop wood, because if I am lazy——’

‘You often are,’ the others said in chorus.

‘If I am lazy,’ continued the mischief, ‘on my duty day I shall like to see an older sister chopping wood for me. I wonder if I shall see her do so ; if not I shall open her eyes and teach her the neighbour duty,’ and off she trotted to the kitchen to chop wood, laughing as she went.

The days passed very happily among the girls. There were so many new things to learn, so many pleasant ways of passing the time, that there was no crying or homesickness. Each elder girl had a younger one to care for, helping her with her lessons

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and keeping her tidy. Each girl had certain duties in the daily housekeeping, as no servants were kept except the watchman. Three hours daily were given to housekeeping, five to lessons, and the remainder for meals and recreation.

Quick Silver, who had never had bound feet, was one of the older girls who had attended the day school for girls for more than two years. She was a bright and intelligent pupil. The truth of the gospel seemed to sink into her heart, and every day seemed to bring forth more fruit in her life. She gathered the little ones around her whenever she had spare time, and taught them gospel stories so tenderly that they soon learnt to love the Saviour of whom she constantly talked. No one was surprised when she and four of the other girls, who had been her chief friends, asked if they might be baptized. After due preparation they were baptized in the

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presence of their parents and by their consent, at the morning service on Palm Sunday.

The following autumn many new girls applied to enter the school. During the holidays the girls had told them of their happy days at school, and all they were learning—so that other parents desired their daughters to have the same advantages. In this way the numbers had grown, until forty girls were now resident in the school. A second matron was procured, and Millicent also was able to help in teaching in the morning, continuing to study with her Chinese teacher in the afternoon.

One morning the quiet of the school life was disturbed, making a break in the calm which usually prevailed.

Some act of disobedience on the part of one of the new girls was reproved; and the culprit, finding she was not beaten, thought a verbal reproof was not worth

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consideration, and disobeyed again at the first opportunity.

‘Little Sister,’ called Miss Fitzpatrick from the desk, ‘come here.’

But Little Sister sat on in her chair as if she heard not.

‘Little Sister, come at once,’ commanded Miss Fitzpatrick the second time. Still the disobedient girl sat on.

‘Quick Silver and Obtained Grace, bring Little Sister to the desk,’ came the command in a quiet tone, which however meant instant obedience.

Fearing at last a severe beating, such as she would have had for a far less fault at home, the Little Sister proceeded to scream at the top of her voice, while the two girls dragged her between them to the desk.

‘Let her go and stand each side of her—she can stand there until she stops screaming ; the classes can go on with their lessons,’ said Miss Fitzpatrick.

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For some minutes it did not seem as if she meant to stop ; but as the classes were now going on with their work—albeit furtive glances from time to time were bestowed in the direction of the desk—it occurred to Little Sister that as no one was paying attention she might as well be quiet.

‘ Silence ! ’ said Miss Fitzpatrick : ‘ all eyes this way ! We foreigners have a good custom in our country : we teach young people to obey those in authority—we hope to teach it here also. If any girl cannot learn to obey, she must return home. Little Sister must try to learn that lesson to-day. She will come upstairs and learn it in a room by herself.’

In building the school some such need as a day’s solitary meditation had been in the mind of Mrs. Somers, who had suggested the building of a small room—light and airy, but apart from the other

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rooms occupied by the girls—and it was to this room that Little Sister was conducted.

When the girls were all seated at their supper they saw Little Sister come in and take her place. No one ever heard her say what helped her to acknowledge her fault, or what passed through the long hours of that summer day, but no further trouble of this kind disturbed the peace of the school for some time.

CHAPTER XI

THE PASSING OF 'WELCOME BROTHER.'

Whatsoever Thou appointest,
Be the service great or small,
Give me grace to rise and do it
At Thy call.

Daily, hourly, let me witness
That Thy gracious will is best,
Till I hear Thee saying sweetly,
'Come and rest.'

.

The Lord Himself, in glory and in grace,
Immortal Gardener of the flowery place,
Walks 'mid His people's tombs, and all the while
His eyes, so wet of old, foreseeing, smile.

MR. AND MRS. SOMERS felt that the time had come when a resident doctor was needed in Fountain Bridge City. The dispensing work increased every week, and was far beyond the time and strength of Mrs. Somers, whose other manifold

THE PASSING OF 'WELCOME BROTHER'

duties were more than enough for the energies of an ordinary woman.

Representations had been sent home to this effect, and Dr. Lane was commissioned to go up to Fountain Bridge City and take over the medical work.

This was a great relief to Mrs. Somers, and as the months passed by she seemed to grow young again and become much more active. So wonderful was the change that only then did others realize what a strain the overwork and responsibility had been upon her mental and physical strength.

The Chief Mandarin was greatly pleased when he heard that a Western doctor was coming to live in the city. In the previous July cholera had devastated the city; many had died, but those in the yamen, including the mandarin's wife, who had been treated by Mrs. Somers, had recovered. This had produced a very favourable

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impression upon his mind towards the missionaries.

Another fact had also conduced to strengthen this favourable impression. During the scare caused by the Japanese War with China the mandarin had been able to obtain reliable news from the missionary, whose courier had every week been down for food and letters to the Chief City. The good feeling which grew up between the official and the missionary owing to this friendliness on the part of Mr. Somers was a strength to the mission work in the city, and prevented many minor troubles happening, which fall to the lot of those who are opposed by the officials in their work.

So it did not surprise Mrs. Somers when the mandarin gave a small house next to their own compound, and close to the north gate of the city, for a public dispensary. When a door was cut through

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the compound wall into the little house, it was easily accessible, and seemed to belong to the mission premises.

Dr. Lane had only been with them six months when a very much more deadly type of cholera again caused a panic in the city, but already he had made friends on all sides, and people sent for him to help them in their need.

One of the first to fall a victim was Mrs. Ma, now a very decided Christian ; she died at sunset, and the following day her little son, the one whose life had been saved some years before, was taken ill and in a few hours passed away also.

Mr. Ma was anxious to have his wife and son buried in a Christian burial-ground, but up to this time there had been no public place for Christian burial.

The dear old Church Uncle Lo, ever ready to help, soon cleared away the difficulty by giving a piece of land a mile away

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from the city for this purpose ; and, lest there should be any nervousness about being the first to be buried there, he took up the remains of his wife and those also of his old mother—both of whom were Christians—and had them laid to rest in the new burial-ground, the first after the pastor had dedicated it. The following day the bodies of Mrs. Ma and her little son were buried there also.

Many heathen in the city died ; and in the mission houses also death was busy. A Bible-woman in the training-home, a boy from the boys' boarding-school, and a girl in the girls' school were taken ; but what caused more sorrow to all than any previous loss was that 'Welcome Brother' sickened, and in a few hours passed away.

When dying, he begged to be raised up that he might speak once more to the dearly loved Lady and the Pastor. They

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were both much troubled at the loss of their faithful and trustworthy servant ; and as they knelt at each side of his bed, his face, now grey with death, was suddenly illuminated, and he whispered : ' I see plainly, only the blood of Jesus can wash away my sin. Jesus, I can trust Thee.'

A few minutes later he looked into the faces of those who had taught him this good news, saying : ' Beloved Pastor, beloved Lady, I must quickly go : Jesus calls me. Coming ! ' he cried, and his spirit passed away.

The last case of cholera was that of a small boy in the city. Mrs. Somers and Dr. Lane both went—the former, with the help of Mrs. Ding, did the nursing. At first he made a rapid recovery ; but after lingering more or less in the same condition of weakness for a week, it became clear to those about him that he was dying.

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One morning he said to Mrs. Somers when she came in, 'Lady, I am passing over ; it is so dark, I am very afraid.'

She had taught him every day of Jesus, the children's Friend and Saviour ; so now, when she had finished washing him and putting him into clean, comfortable garments, she took him in her arms and pillowed his little head upon her breast and told him of her love for him, which he could understand, no one ever having loved and tended him so kindly before. Then she told him again, and over again, of Jesus's wonderful love for little children, and the home He was preparing for all who trusted Him ; of the city where happy boys and girls play, where no pain and sorrow ever come, and where they are never afraid—for it is never dark there, because Jesus never leaves them.

She sang him to sleep with the children's hymn :

THE PASSING OF 'WELCOME BROTHER'

There's a Friend for little children
Above the bright blue sky.

The next morning, as Mrs. Ding took her place beside him, he looked at her confidently, saying, 'Jesus very much loves the Little Brother.'

Later in the morning he said, 'Tell the Lady the children's Friend is carrying me to the city where the sun never goes behind the mountain, and where the children are never sick and never afraid.'

So he too fell asleep without fear, and as he passed over there was light.

Wouldst know where the darkness deepens,
Where souls are dying in fear?
In every heathen country
You can see it as death draws near.
When you watch them die in anguish,
Not knowing the Light has come,
Light sent to lighten the Gentiles
To God's everlasting home.

CHAPTER XII

CHRISTMAS JOY

Jesus Christ was born to-day,
Alleluia ! Alleluia !
In an outer stable lay,
Alleluia ! Alleluia !
Shepherds first there worship Him,
Kings myrrh, gold, and incense bring,
Worship Christ the new-born King.
Alleluia ! Alleluia !

So sang the boys from the boarding-school in the early Christmas morning under the mission-house windows. However unmusical Chinese voices are, the boys sang well according to their ability, and the Christmas message was as sweet as ever in the ears of Mr. and Mrs. Somers, who, when the boys ceased singing, let down to them baskets of oranges and nuts from the windows of the verandah.

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All the native Christians had been busy decorating the church, but their idea of decoration is widely different from the style that prevails among our church workers at home.

In China every window must have a symbolical design according to the individual taste of each decorator.

The catechist had arranged green cloth on his window, upon which flocks of cotton-wool goats were shepherded by small models of Chinamen.

The schoolmaster had depicted the wise men like Englishmen, travelling across a sandy plain, having Chinese coolies carrying behind them loads containing gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The school-boys' window symbolized Abraham offering up his only son.

The Bible-women's window had a clever design. Over a well-made Noah's Ark was a cotton-wool dove, hung so that it

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rose and fell above the ark, while a Chinese Noah had his hand outstretched to take it in.

The girls from the boarding-school had made a big lion putting his paw upon a large ball—this was to represent the Lion of the tribe of Judah conquering the world.

The doorways were arched with ferns and flowers, roped by the gate-keeper and watchman. Mrs. Somers decorated the pulpit with red geraniums and leaves—while Millicent made the reading-desk to correspond, and Miss Fitzpatrick the font, with the same red blossoms and green foliage.

Five men publicly renounced their idols and confessed their faith in Christ Jesus as their Saviour, and were baptized at the morning service on Christmas Day.

The sermon was preached by the pastor on the angels' song—the gospel of good news to all men ; and the collection was

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to provide more evangelists for the preaching of the same good news among the yet unevangelized villages in the county.

After the heathen section of the congregation had left the back of the church, over two hundred native Christians, with the five missionaries, gathered round the Lord's Table to remember afresh His great love to them and all the world.

During the afternoon, while the usual Christmas feasts were going on in the schools of the compound, the missionaries all went up to the Hollow, where the lepers gathered into the open-air mission hall, which had been decorated for the event by the two church elders and Mr. Ma, with the aid of Luke, Mrs. Somers's helper.

Over fifty big Chinese lanterns were hung up, the gift of Mr. Ma ; and these were to be lighted for the evening service later in the day.

A large Christmas-tree, heavily laden

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with good, useful presents, stood in the middle of the hall.

It was the first the poor lepers had ever seen, and their delight knew no bounds. The missionaries had prepared it on Christmas Eve, and wonderful were the gifts which the loving care of people at home had provided for these, the most burdened of all diseased people. No one had been forgotten ; every one—old and young—seemed to have just the thing they wanted most. When the tree was at last bare, they all sang Christmas carols, and then, with a few loving words from the pastor, they were left to enjoy their Christmas cheer, which the ladies had provided for them. Later in the evening a full Christmas service would be held, when all the lanterns would be lighted, and the new leper catechist, himself a leper, who had lately come to reside in the Hollow, would preach his first sermon.

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When darkness fell on the city, the mission compound looked like fairyland. Hundreds of lanterns, large and small, and of every colour, were lighted and hung from trees and posts in every direction. Then the roughly-made tent covering the Christmas-tree was carefully removed, and there it stood in the middle of the lawn, with scores of little coloured candles, all of which the missionaries quickly lighted.

The native Christians had all been feasting in their own homes, and were invited to come to the mission compound for the Christmas-tree.

So they gathered in a circle on the lawn and sang carols—then the gifts from the tree were distributed: pieces of flannel or flannelette for the women, pieces of print for the elder girls; dolls for the younger ones; toys for the babies; socks and tobacco for the men; caps and note-books with pencils for the boys. The servants

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also had their share, and great pleasure was felt when each person received a piece of coloured scented soap and an orange. At last the tree was bare, except for the candles, which were allowed to burn until the last.

And now the catechist and schoolmaster mysteriously brought forward a table covered with red cloth, and the catechist said that they had all joined to give the missionaries some little presents. Were they not all brothers and sisters? and if so, the giving was a one-sided pleasure if they might not all share it.

He then presented Mrs. Somers with a pair of silver bracelets, and the two lady missionaries with silver chains to hang their fans upon in the hot season. To the beloved pastor a new walking-stick with a silver top, and his name engraved upon it; and to Dr. Lane a pair of ivory chop-sticks with silver mounts.

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Great was the amusement on the faces of the Chinese as they watched the success of their little surprise, for not a word had been said beforehand to the missionaries, and this love of the natives touched them very much.

Each missionary thanked them in a few words, and then the pastor prayed that Christmas love might ever live in their hearts and lives, and by that means lead the steps of others to come and worship Christ the New-born King.

At last the missionaries were at liberty to rest awhile, then they dressed for dinner, and all assembled to eat the orthodox English Christmas dinner at Mr. Somers's hospitable house.

They were a very merry party, albeit rather tired after the long, busy day they had passed in helping to make glad the happiest day of all the year to the native Christians. Mrs. Somers hurried into the

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sitting-room to see that the lamps were lighted and that the rosy tints she had arranged when she decorated the room showed up brightly to make a cosy home-like welcome to the others when they came in.

However busy she was in her outside work, she never failed to make study and sitting-room fresh and sweet with plants and flowers, and the dining-room table clean and well laid with an attractive table-centre and vases of ferns or flowers to brighten it.

Her husband often wondered how she got through so much mission work, and yet the little home refinements were never missing; but she was an early riser, energetic, and a good organizer, so she trained her coolies to do much she would have had to do herself or leave undone; then a minute or two of overlooking secured that her orders were well carried out.

CHRISTMAS JOY

How restful **I** this little English home was to them both when over-tired with outside work and anxiety ! It was like an oasis in a barren land.

Mrs. Somers was resting a moment, when in came Millicent, looking so pretty in a new white nun's-veiling dress, with touches of red silk round the throat and elbows. English holly, with berries on it, gleamed in her dark hair, and a spray rested on her left shoulder.

There was a happy, shy look on her face as she bent to kiss her cousin.

‘What is it, Many Blessings ?’ asked Mrs. Somers, as she held her hands for a moment to keep her near her—‘your face has a secret ; child, tell Cosie,’ she added tenderly.

‘I came across early, Cosie, to tell you ; but oh, Gladys, I cannot—I am so happy,’ she exclaimed.

They had not heard Dr. Lane enter, and

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he bent down to them. 'I will tell you, Mrs. Somers ; I came across early to do so too. Millicent—or Many Blessings, as I love to think of her—has promised to be my wife, and crown my life with the blessing of her love. We want your good wishes.'

'Indeed you have them ; I am very, very glad,' replied Mrs. Somers, and she blessed them both with all good wishes for their happiness.

'I must run and tell my beloved before he comes in to dinner,' she added, and ran off, leaving them a few moments to themselves.

She also scribbled a line and sent a coolie to Miss Fitzpatrick, telling her the news, and invited her to come over and wish the happy couple joy as soon as possible. 'If she does not know she will feel out of it, and I would not like her to feel grieved,' she thought—'especially to-night.'

CHRISTMAS JOY

Harold was very glad, and wished them much happiness in his quiet way. 'If you are half as happy, old man, as we are, you will be too happy for words,' he added, and he looked fondly at his wife and led her to the couch.

Presently Miss Fitzpatrick arrived, and joined merrily in congratulations and in teasing the happy couple.

Dinner had just commenced when a great commotion was heard at the outer compound gate. Then English voices were heard singing the old carol :

Good King Wenceslas looked out.

Up jumped Mrs. Somers and Millicent. 'Why, Charlie and Arthur must have arrived!'

Long before the verse could be completed they both rushed downstairs and were folded each in their respective brother's arms.

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

‘How did you come?’ Mrs. Somers asked, when at last some measure of quiet was restored.

Her brother replied: ‘By ship, my dears, the selfsame way you came! But, seriously, you had all been through such troubles, nothing would satisfy the home people but sending us out to spend Christmas with you, hoping it would cheer you up. We meant to arrive last night, but the ship was late in getting into port. However, here we are at last, and very hungry,’ exclaimed Arthur.

So after a few minutes’ delay, while the newcomers had the comfort of a wash, the dinner was resumed.

‘What a splendid idea of the home people!’ said Harold Somers, as he chatted a moment with the young men before they went to bed. ‘Nothing they could have thought of would have given Gladys and Millicent more pleasure than your coming

CHRISTMAS JOY

unexpectedly for Christmas. Millicent has a little secret to tell you to-morrow—unless you have already guessed it,' he added.

'I believe the doctor has fallen in love with Millicent,' said Arthur. 'She looked so shy to-night and kept away from him so markedly. I liked the man.'

'I rather took to him myself,' said Charlie.

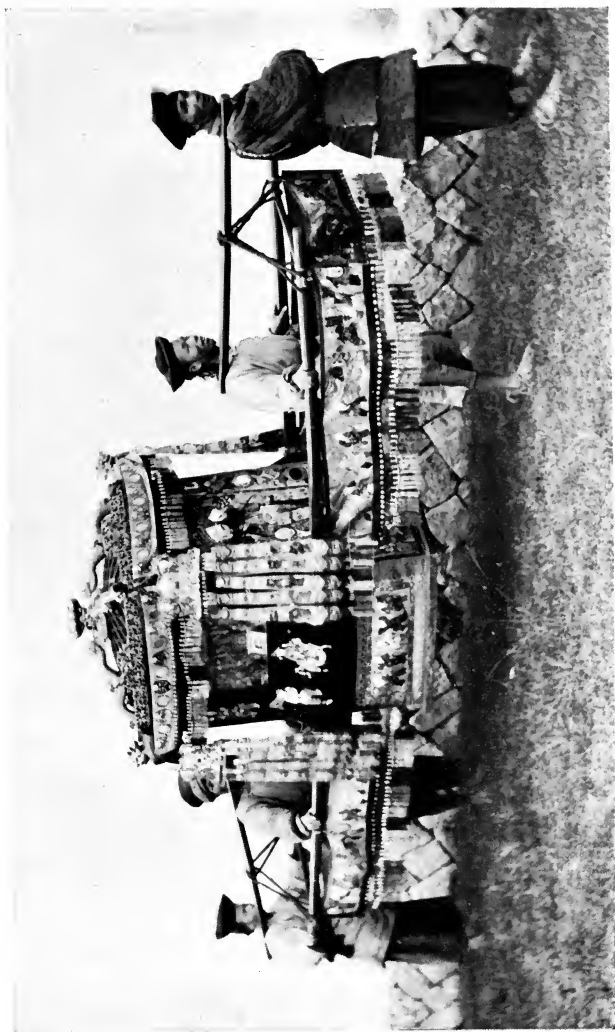
CHAPTER XIII

WEDDING BELLS

She was ours, henceforth she is only thine ;
Be good to her, who hath her life in thee.

WHEN Millicent Hanson became engaged at Christmas time to Dr. Lane, her brother and cousins rejoiced, for they fully appreciated his noble character, and knew they could safely trust her to him.

It was decided to write home to Mr. and Mrs. Hanson and ask for permission for the marriage to take place at Easter ; and then her brother and Gladys would stay for the ceremony. So the wedding followed in a few months after the happy couple were engaged, a short engagement being the best thing in China, as Chinese



A CHINESE WEDDING-CHAIR



WEDDING BELLS

do not understand English courtship, and see no good in it.

The church was beautiful with flowers and palms. Six Chinese girls—three of them the daughters of mandarins, all of them girls from the mission boarding-school, beautifully dressed in new Chinese clothes—acted as bridesmaids, walking quietly up the church before the bride.

The mandarins sat in the front pew, their wives in the front seat on the women's side of the church.

The English consul, Mr. Lennon, was an old friend of Millicent's father ; and as the young Englishmen were keen for a week's shooting among the tiger haunts in the mountains surrounding Fountain Bridge City, he good-naturedly had promised to come up for the wedding and a few days' tiger-hunting.

The civil marriage was contracted first before the English consul, a few minutes

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

before the bride and her attendants entered for the church service.

The choir had been training for some weeks to chant the wedding psalm and sing the wedding hymns, for by the bride's special request the service was to be in Chinese, the consul giving the bride away.

Dr. Lane looked very happy as his gaze lighted on the face of his beautiful bride in her white flowing silk dress, her hair wreathed with real orange blossoms, and her face covered with a rich and costly lace veil—the gift of her mother.

‘Lady,’ said Mrs. Mi, the Chief Mandarin’s wife, after the service was over, ‘if Mr. Mi is willing, I should like to be married to him again—the service is a very good one and beautiful to see.’

‘Truly, truly,’ echoed the wives of the two lesser officials, ‘we should likewise desire to be married again in this foreign fashion.’

WEDDING BELLS

Meek Heart, one of the bridesmaids, had a very important time in her own eyes—and was really a very useful little woman.

A great many of the Chinese ladies whom the missionaries had frequently visited in the city had been invited to the reception in the mission house, where the bridesmaids were to wait upon the guests, as there was to be no formal meal, only tea, cakes of many kinds, and the wedding cake. After the latter had been cut by the bride and served to the mandarins and their wives, the gentry from the city and their wives, and the English friends, who had all assembled in the drawing-room, it was carried by the bridesmaids to the girls' boarding-school, where the women from the training-home and the native Christian women were all having a wedding feast with the girls, and cut and served round by the little bridesmaids.

Then the catechist and the school-

BESIDE THE RED MOUNTAIN

master were to take the remainder across to the boys' boarding-school, where it was to be served to all the native Christian men, the boys, and the servants of the compound, who had also been having a feast together.

Meek Heart was heard later in the evening explaining to some of the younger girls: 'All the angels in heaven—the women and girl angels, I mean—will look like the bride looked to-day, with white clothes and with that lovely shiny look in their eyes. Yes, but oh, I am glad I am a girl! The men angels cannot look nice even in heaven, you see; no clothes they could wear in any fashion would make them look like a beautiful bride.'

The doctor and his wife went off to the little house in Four Bamboos, where they were to spend their honeymoon. Leaving the compound, they passed under an archway of crackers of Chinese manufacture,

WEDDING BELLS

tied on sticks, which were let off as they left, every one sending them on their way with all good wishes.

Consul Lennon was so much impressed with what he saw of the goodwill of the people, the kindness and attention of the Chinese officials, the crowded congregations, and the thriving condition of the mission work generally, that both he and the English visitors lingered a few days to see the compound resume its normal state. Every day the consul became more deeply interested in the work, and the visit was much enjoyed by every one. The mandarins entertained the consul and the missionary, with his English guests, at their several houses—the wives in their own apartments entertaining Mrs. Somers and her party, and creating much amusement by their quaint remarks on English customs.

Mrs. Somers and her husband were stand-

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ing on the verandah watching the sunset as the guests returned from making their hospitality calls, when Consul Lennon turned to Mrs. Somers, saying: 'Here is a parcel for you from the Chief Mandarin—rather heavy, but the good man said he desired to send it through me to you, thus making a more official gift of it, whatever it is. You must open it to find out, for he did not let me into the secret; indeed, he told me he understood mandarins, generally speaking, made missionaries the scapegoats for any trouble Europeans generally brought about—but he had not had experience of other Europeans. As for the missionaries here, however, they had (he said) been a great gain to the city, and no citizens were better behaved than those who accepted the "One-true-God Religion."'

Mrs. Somers's hand was on her husband's arm, and she looked into his face, but spoke

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no word—indeed, the look was eloquent enough in itself—as she passed the parcel over to him.

Harold quietly untied the parcel, placing the contents on the table at his side. There were four smaller red packages inside the outer cover.

The first contained a packet of money, with a slip on which was written, ‘One hundred dollars, in gratitude to the foreign lady for havng cured my unworthy wife.’

The other parcels likewise contained packets of money, with slips in each case. The second slip had the words, ‘One hundred dollars, because the foreign teacher showed me much friendship during the Japan War.’

The third, ‘One hundred dollars, in gratitude for the assistance rendered by the foreign missionaries during the cholera last summer.’

The fourth, ‘One hundred dollars in

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acknowledgement of the moral and educational work done by the foreign teachers.'

'Please use this small gift for any of your needs.

'(Signed) MI-TAU-TAI,

'Fountain Bridge City Yamen.'

'The Hospital for the Lanes,' exclaimed Mrs. Somers and her husband; 'this will start the work.'

'I shall give you fifty pounds towards the Hospital too,' said Consul Lennon, 'for I know too well I have done very little for the God I profess to serve. And,' he continued, 'I will write to the English papers and give some sketch of your work and what I have seen, and will beg the English to send me money for the completion of the Hospital. So have no anxiety about funds—I will see to that; you get the Hospital built as soon as you can. Thank God! my eyes have been

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opened, and it is not too late for me to do better.'

'We are so thankful about all this; it has been so wonderful. We want to give God all the glory, for the power and strength for service came direct from Him,' replied Mr. Somers; and he took his wife's hand in his. 'He came before us, and He has remained with us—and we have confidence in Him for the future. Is it not so, my wife?'

'Ah,' said the Consul to himself, as he watched them go off to their own room, 'those two have but one purpose—to serve God; that is the secret of their success, for they put GOD FIRST.'

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